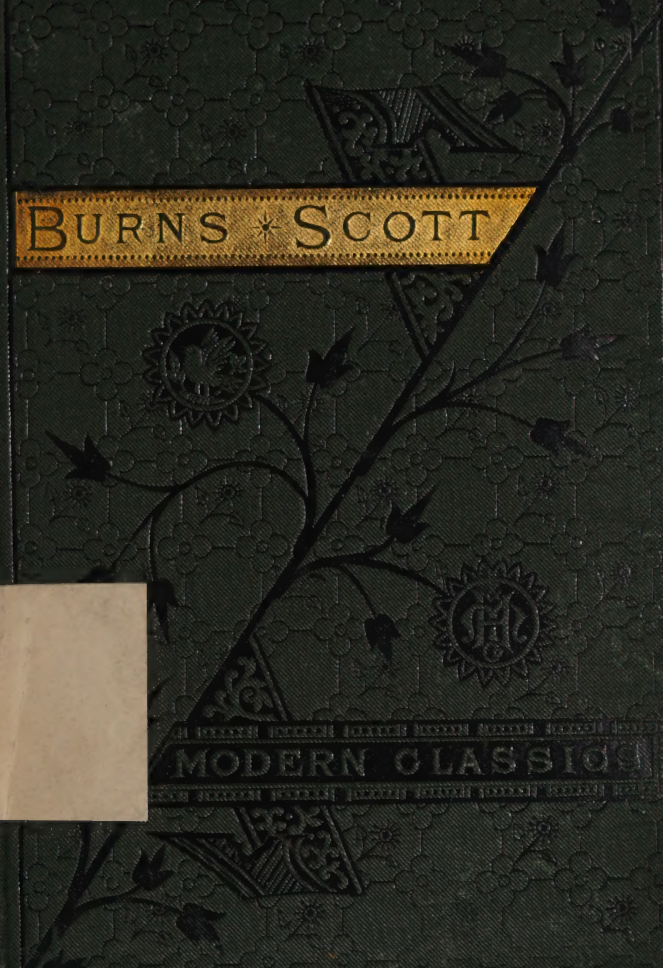




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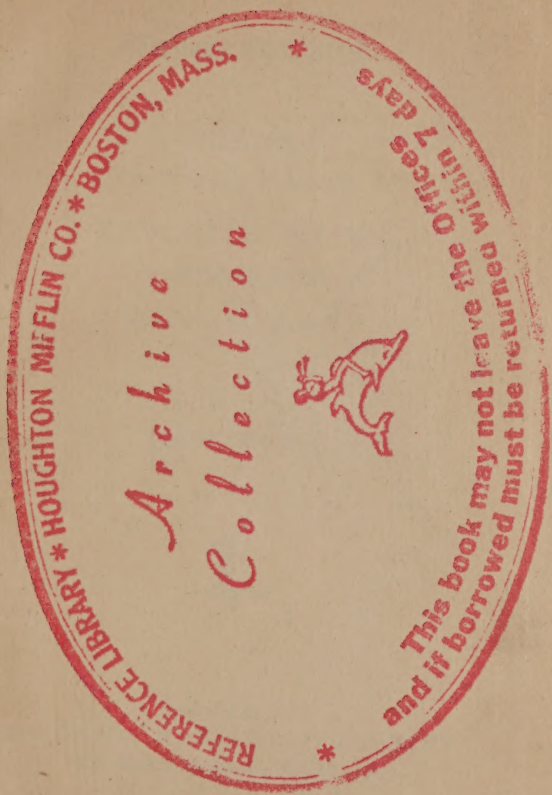
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BURNS.

By THOMAS CARLYLE.

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BURNS,
By THOMAS CARLYLE.







BURNS.

BURNS first came upon the world as a prodigy; and was, in that character, entertained by it, in the usual fashion, with loud, vague, tumultuous wonder, speedily subsiding into censure and neglect; till his early and most mournful death again awakened an enthusiasm for him, which, especially as there was now nothing to be done, and much to be spoken, has prolonged itself even to our own time. It is true, the "nine days" have long since elapsed; and the very continuance of this clamor proves that Burns was no vulgar wonder. Accordingly, even in sober judgments, where, as years passed by, he has come to rest more and more exclusively on his own intrinsic merits, and may now be wellnigh shorn of that casual radiance, he appears not only as a true British poet, but as one of the most considerable British men of the eighteenth

century. Let it not be objected that he did little. He did much, if we consider where and how. If the work performed was small, we must remember that he had his very materials to discover; for the metal he worked in lay hid under the desert moor, where no eye but his had guessed its existence; and we may almost say, that with his own hand he had to construct the tools for fashioning it. For he found himself in deepest obscurity, without help, without instruction, without model; or with models only of the meanest sort. An educated man stands, as it were, in the midst of a boundless arsenal and magazine, filled with all the weapons and engines which man's skill has been able to devise from the earliest time; and he works, accordingly, with a strength borrowed from all past ages. How different is *his* state who stands on the outside of that storehouse, and feels that its gates must be stormed, or remain forever shut against him! His means are the commonest and rudest; the mere work done is no measure of his strength. A dwarf behind his steam-engine may remove mountains; but no dwarf will hew them down with a pickaxe; and he must be a Titan that hurls them abroad with his arms.

It is in this last shape that Burns presents himself. Born in an age the most prosaic Britain had yet seen, and in a condition the most disadvantageous, where his mind, if it ac-

■

complished aught, must accomplish it under the pressure of continual bodily toil, nay, of penury and desponding apprehension of the worst evils, and with no furtherance but such knowledge as dwells in a poor man's hut, and the rhymes of a Ferguson or Ramsay for his standard of beauty, he sinks not under all these impediments: through the fogs and darkness of that obscure region, his lynx eye discerns the true relations of the world and human life; he grows into intellectual strength, and trains himself into intellectual expertness. Impelled by the expansive movement of his own irrepressible soul, he struggles forward into the general view; and with haughty modesty lays down before us, as the fruit of his labor, a gift which Time has now pronounced imperishable. Add to all this that his darksome drudging childhood and youth was by far the kindest era of his whole life, and that he died in his thirty-seventh year, and then ask if it be strange that his poems are imperfect, and of small extent, or that his genius attained no mastery in its art. Alas! his sun shone as through a tropical tornado; and the pale shadow of death eclipsed it at noon! Shrouded in such baleful vapors, the genius of Burns was never seen in clear azure splendor, enlightening the world: but some beams from it did, by fits, pierce through; and it tinted those clouds with rainbow and orient colors, into a glory and stern grandeur, which men silently gazed on with wonder and tears!

We are anxious not to exaggerate : for it is exposition rather than admiration that our readers require of us here ; and yet to avoid some tendency to that side is no easy matter. We love Burns, and we pity him ; and love and pity are prone to magnify. Criticism, it is sometimes thought, should be a cold business : we are not so sure of this ; but, at all events, our concern with Burns is not exclusively that of critics. True and genial as his poetry must appear, it is not chiefly as a poet, but as a man, that he interests and affects us. He was often advised to write a tragedy : time and means were not lent him for this ; but through life he enacted a tragedy, and one of the deepest. We question whether the world has since witnessed so utterly sad a scene ; whether Napoleon himself, left to brawl with Sir Hudson Lowe, and perish on his rock, “ amid the melancholy main,” presented to the reflecting mind such a “ spectacle of pity and fear ” as did this intrinsically nobler, gentler, and perhaps greater soul, wasting itself away in a hopeless struggle with base entanglements, which coiled closer and closer round him, till only death opened him an outlet. Conquerors are a class of men with whom, for most part, the world could well dispense ; nor can the hard intellect, the unsympathizing loftiness, and high but selfish enthusiasm of such persons inspire us in general with any affection ; at best it may excite amaze-

ment ; and their fall, like that of a pyramid, will be beheld with a certain sadness and awe. But a true poet, a man in whose heart resides some effluence of wisdom, some tone of the "Eternal Melodies," is the most precious gift that can be bestowed on a generation : we see in him a freer, purer development of whatever is noblest in ourselves ; his life is a rich lesson to us ; and we mourn his death as that of a benefactor who loved and taught us.

Such a gift had Nature, in her bounty, bestowed on us in Robert Burns ; but with queen-like indifference she cast it from her hand, like a thing of no moment ; and it was defaced and torn asunder, as an idle bawble, before we recognized it. To the ill-starred Burns was given the power of making man's life more venerable, but that of wisely guiding his own life was not given. Destiny, — for so in our ignorance we must speak, — his faults, the faults of others, proved too hard for him ; and that spirit, which might have soared could it but have walked, soon sank to the dust, its glorious faculties trodden under foot in the blossom ; and died, we may almost say, without ever having lived. And so kind and warm a soul ; so full of inborn riches, of love to all living and lifeless things ! How his heart flows out in sympathy over universal Nature, and in her bleakest provinces discerns a beauty and a meaning ! The "Daisy" falls not unheeded

under his ploughshare ; nor the ruined nest of that “wee, cowering, timorous beastie,” cast forth, after all its provident pains, to “thole the sleety dribble and cranreuch cauld.” The “hoar visage” of Winter delights him ; he dwells with a sad and oft-returning fondness in these scenes of solemn desolation ; but the voice of the tempest becomes an anthem to his ears ; he loves to walk in the sounding woods, for “it raises his thoughts to *Him that walketh on the wings of the wind.*” A true poet-soul, for it needs but to be struck, and the sound it yields will be music ! But observe him chiefly as he mingles with his brother men. What warm, all-comprehending fellow-feeling ; what trustful, boundless love ; what generous exaggeration of the object loved ! His rustic friend, his nut-brown maiden, are no longer mean and homely, but a hero and a queen, whom he prizes as the paragons of earth. The rough scenes of Scottish life, not seen by him in any Arcadian illusion, but in the rude contradiction, in the smoke and soil of a too harsh reality, are still lovely to him. Poverty is indeed his companion, but Love also, and Courage ; the simple feelings, the worth, the nobleness, that dwell under the straw roof, are dear and venerable to his heart, and thus over the lowest provinces of man’s existence he pours the glory of his own soul ; and they rise, in shadow and sunshine, softened and brightened

into a beauty which other eyes discern not in the highest. He has a just self-consciousness which too often degenerates into pride ; yet it is a noble pride, for defence, not for offence ; no cold suspicious feeling, but a frank and social one. The peasant poet bears himself, we might say, like a king in exile : he is cast among the low, and feels himself equal to the highest ; yet he claims no rank, that none may be disputed to him. The forward he can repel, the supercilious he can subdue ; pretensions of wealth or ancestry are of no avail with him ; there is a fire in that dark eye, under which the “ insolence of condescension ” cannot thrive. In his abasement, in his extreme need, he forgets not for a moment the majesty of poetry and manhood. And yet, far as he feels himself above common men, he wanders not apart from them, but mixes warmly in their interests ; nay, throws himself into their arms, and, as it were, entreats them to love him. It is moving to see how, in his darkest despondency, this proud being still seeks relief from friendship ; unbosoms himself, often to the unworthy ; and, amid tears, strains to his glowing heart a heart that knows only the name of friendship. And yet he was “ quick to learn ” ; a man of keen vision, before whom common disguises afforded no concealment. His understanding saw through the hollowness even of accomplished deceivers ; but there was a generous credulity in his heart.

And so did our peasant show himself among us ;
“a soul like an Æolian harp, in whose strings
the vulgar wind, as it passed through them,
changed itself into articulate melody.” And
this was he for whom the world found no fitter
business than quarrelling with smugglers and
vintners, computing excise-dues upon tallow,
and gauging ale-barrels ! In such toils was
that mighty spirit sorrowfully wasted ; and a
hundred years may pass on, before another
such is given us to waste.

All that remains of Burns, the writings he
has left, seem to us, as we hinted above, no
more than a poor, mutilated fraction of what
was in him ; brief, broken glimpses of a genius
that could never show itself complete ; that
wanted all things for completeness, — culture,
leisure, true effort, nay, even length of life. His
poems are, with scarcely any exception, mere
occasional effusions ; poured forth with little
premeditation ; expressing, by such means as
offered, the passion, opinion, or humor of the
hour. Never in one instance was it permitted
him to grapple with any subject with the full
collection of his strength, to fuse and mould it
in the concentrated fire of his genius. To try
by the strict rules of art such imperfect frag-
ments would be at once unprofitable and unfair.
Nevertheless there is something in these poems,
marred and defective as they are, which forbids

the most fastidious student of poetry to pass them by. Some sort of enduring quality they must have : for, after fifty years of the wildest vicissitudes in poetic taste, they still continue to be read ; nay, are read more and more eagerly, more and more extensively ; and this not only by literary virtuosos, and that class upon whom transitory causes operate most strongly, but by all classes, down to the most hard, unlettered, and truly natural class, who read little, and especially no poetry, except because they find pleasure in it. The grounds of so singular and wide a popularity, which extends, in a literal sense, from the palace to the hut, and over all regions where the English tongue is spoken, are well worth inquiring into. After every just deduction, it seems to imply some rare excellence in these works. What is that excellence ?

To answer this question will not lead us far. The excellence of Burns is, indeed, among the rarest, whether in poetry or prose ; but, at the same time, it is plain and easily recognized, — his *sincerity*, his indisputable air of truth. Here are no fabulous woes or joys ; no hollow fantastic sentimentalities ; no wiredrawn refinings, either in thought or feeling : the passion that is traced before us has glowed in a living heart ; the opinion he utters has risen in his own understanding, and been a light to his own steps. He does not write from hearsay, but from sight

and experience ; it is the scenes that he has lived and labored amidst, that he describes ; those scenes, rude and humble as they are, have kindled beautiful emotions in his soul, noble thoughts, and definite resolves ; and he speaks forth what is in him, not from any outward call of vanity or interest, but because his heart is too full to be silent. He speaks it with such melody and modulation as he can ; “ in homely rustic jingle ” ; but it is his own, and genuine. This is the grand secret for finding readers and retaining them : let him who would move and convince others, be first moved and convinced himself. Horace’s rule, *Si vis me flere*, is applicable in a wider sense than the literal one. To every poet, to every writer, we might say : Be true, if you would be believed. Let a man but speak forth with genuine earnestness the thought, the emotion, the actual condition of his own heart ; and other men, so strangely are we all knit together by the tie of sympathy, must and will give heed to him. In culture, in extent of view, we may stand above the speaker, or below him ; but in either case, his words, if they are earnest and sincere, will find some response within us ; for in spite of all casual varieties in outward rank or inward, as face answers to face, so does the heart of man to man.

This may appear a very simple principle, and one which Burns had little merit in discovering.

True, the discovery is easy enough : but the practical appliance is not easy ; is indeed the fundamental difficulty which all poets have to strive with, and which scarcely one in a hundred ever fairly surmounts. A head too dull to discriminate the true from the false ; a heart too dull to love the one at all risks, and to hate the other in spite of all temptations, are alike fatal to a writer. With either, or, as more commonly happens, with both of these deficiencies combine a love of distinction, a wish to be original, which is seldom wanting, and we have Affectation, the bane of literature, as *Cant*, its elder brother, is of morals. How often does the one and the other front us, in poetry as in life ! Great poets themselves are not always free of this vice ; nay, it is precisely on a certain sort and degree of greatness that it is most commonly ingrafted. A strong effort after excellence will sometimes solace itself with a mere shadow of success ; he who has much to unfold will sometimes unfold it imperfectly. Byron, for instance, was no common man : yet, if we examine his poetry with this view, we shall find it far enough from faultless. Generally speaking, we should say that it is not true. He refreshes us, not with the divine fountain, but too often with vulgar strong waters, stimulating indeed to the taste, but soon ending in dislike, or even nausea. Are his *Harolds* and *Giaours*, we would ask, real men ; we mean, poetically

consistent and conceivable men? Do not these characters, does not the character of their author, which more or less shines through them all, rather appear a thing put on for the occasion; no natural or possible mode of being, but something intended to look much grander than nature? Surely, all these stormful agonies, this volcanic heroism, superhuman contempt, and moody desperation, with so much scowling, and teeth-gnashing, and other sulphurous humor, is more like the brawling of a player in some paltry tragedy, which is to last three hours, than the bearing of a man in the business of life, which is to last threescore and ten years. To our minds there is a taint of this sort, something which we should call theatrical, false, affected, in every one of these otherwise so powerful pieces. Perhaps *Don Juan*, especially the latter parts of it, is the only thing approaching to a *sincere* work he ever wrote; the only work where he showed himself, in any measure, as he was, and seemed so intent on his subject as, for moments, to forget himself. Yet Byron hated this vice; we believe, heartily detested it: nay, he had declared formal war against it in words. So difficult is it even for the strongest to make this primary attainment, which might seem the simplest of all,—to *read its own consciousness without mistakes*, without errors involuntary or wilful! We recollect no poet of Burns's susceptibility

who comes before us from the first, and abides with us to the last, with such a total want of affectation. He is an honest man, and an honest writer. In his successes and his failures, in his greatness and his littleness, he is ever clear, simple, true, and glitters with no lustre but his own. We reckon this to be a great virtue ; to be, in fact, the root of most other virtues, literary as well as moral.

Here, however, let us say, it is to the poetry of Burns that we now allude ; to those writings which he had time to meditate, and where no special reason existed to warp his critical feeling, or obstruct his endeavor to fulfil it. Certain of his letters, and other fractions of prose composition, by no means deserve this praise. Here, doubtless, there is not the same natural truth of style, but, on the contrary, something not only stiff, but strained and twisted ; a certain high-flown inflated tone, the stilted emphasis of which contrasts ill with the firmness and rugged simplicity of even his poorest verses. Thus no man, it would appear, is altogether unaffected. Does not Shakespeare himself sometimes premeditate the sheerest bombast ! But even with regard to these letters of Burns, it is but fair to state that he had two excuses. The first was his comparative deficiency in language. Burns, though for most part he writes with singular force and even gracefulness, is not master of English prose, as he is of Scottish verse ; not

master of it, we mean, in proportion to the depth and vehemence of his matter. These letters strike us as the effort of a man to express something which he has no organ fit for expressing. But a second and weightier excuse is to be found in the peculiarity of Burns's social rank. His correspondents are often men whose relation to him he has never accurately ascertained; whom therefore he is either fore-arming himself against, or else unconsciously flattering, by adopting the style he thinks will please them. At all events, we should remember that these faults, even in his letters, are not the rule, but the exception. Whenever he writes, as one would ever wish to do, to trusted friends and on real interests, his style becomes simple, vigorous, expressive, sometimes even beautiful. His letters to Mrs. Dunlop are uniformly excellent.

But we return to his poetry. In addition to its sincerity, it has another peculiar merit which indeed is but a mode, or perhaps a means, of the foregoing: this displays itself in his choice of subjects, or rather in his indifference as to subjects, and the power he has of making all subjects interesting. The ordinary poet, like the ordinary man, is forever seeking in external circumstances the help which can be found only in himself. In what is familiar and near at hand he discerns no form or comeliness: home is not poetical but prosaic; it is in some past,

distant, conventional heroic world that poetry resides ; were he there and not here, were he thus and not so, it would be well with him. Hence our innumerable host of rose-colored novels and iron-mailed epics, with their locality not on the earth, but somewhere nearer to the moon. Hence our virgins of the sun, and our knights of the cross, malicious Saracens in turbans, and copper-colored chiefs in wampum, and so many other truculent figures from the heroic times or the heroic climates, who on all hands swarm in our poetry. Peace be with them ! But yet, as a great moralist proposed preaching to the men of this century, so would we fain preach to the poets, “ a sermon on the duty of staying at home.” Let them be sure that heroic ages and heroic climates can do little for them. That form of life has attraction for us, less because it is better or nobler than our own, than simply because it is different ; and even this attraction must be of the most transient sort. For will not our own age, one day, be an ancient one, and have as quaint a costume as the rest ; not contrasted with the rest, therefore, but ranked along with them, in respect of quaintness ? Does Homer interest us now because he wrote of what passed beyond his native Greece, and two centuries before he was born ; or because he wrote what passed in God’s world, and in the heart of man, which is the same after thirty centuries ? Let our poets

look to this: is their feeling really finer, truer, and their vision deeper than that of other men, — they have nothing to fear, even from the humblest subject; is it not so, — they have nothing to hope but an ephemeral favor even from the highest.

The poet, we imagine, can never have far to seek for a subject: the elements of his art are in him, and around him on every hand; for him the ideal world is not remote from the actual, but under it and within it: nay, he is a poet precisely because he can discern it there. Wherever there is a sky above him, and a world around him, the poet is in his place: for here too is man's existence, with its infinite longings and small acquirings; its ever-thwarted, ever-renewed endeavors; its unspeakable aspirations, its fears and hopes, that wander through eternity; and all the mystery of brightness and of gloom that it was ever made of, in any age or climate, since man first began to live. Is there not the fifth act of a tragedy in every death-bed, though it were a peasant's, and a bed of heath? And are wooings and weddings obsolete, that there can be comedy no longer? Or are men suddenly grown wise, that Laughter must no longer shake his sides, but be cheated of his farce? Man's life and nature is as it was, and as it will ever be. But the poet must have an eye to read these things, and a heart to understand them, or they come and pass away before

him in vain. He is a *vates*, a seer; a gift of vision has been given him. Has life no meanings for him which another cannot equally decipher; then he is no poet, and Delphi itself will not make him one.

In this respect Burns, though not perhaps absolutely a great poet, better manifests his capability, better proves the truth of his genius, than if he had by his own strength kept the whole Minerva Press going to the end of his literary course. He shows himself at least a poet of Nature's own making; and Nature, after all, is still the grand agent in making poets. We often hear of this and the other external condition being requisite for the existence of a poet. Sometimes it is a certain sort of training: he must have studied certain things, studied for instance "the elder dramatists," and so learned a poetic language; as if poetry lay in the tongue, not in the heart. At other times we are told he must be bred in a certain rank, and must be on a confidential footing with the higher classes; because, above all things, he must see the world. As to seeing the world, we apprehend this will cause him little difficulty, if he have but eyesight to see it with. Without eyesight, indeed, the task might be hard. The blind or the purblind man "travels from Dan to Beersheba, and finds it all barren." But happily every poet is born *in* the world, and sees it, with or against his will, every day

and every hour he lives. The mysterious workmanship of man's heart, the true light and the inscrutable darkness of man's destiny, reveal themselves not only in capital cities and crowded saloons, but in every hut and hamlet where men have their abode. Nay, do not the elements of all human virtues and all human vices, the passions at once of a Borgia and of a Luther, lie written, in stronger or fainter lines, in the consciousness of every individual bosom that has practised honest self-examination? Truly, this same world may be seen in Mossgiel and Tarbolton, if we look well, as clearly as it ever came to light in Crockford's or the Tuileries itself.

But sometimes still harder requisitions are laid on the poor aspirant to poetry; for it is hinted that he should have *been born* two centuries ago, inasmuch as poetry, about that date, vanished from the earth and became no longer attainable by men! Such cobweb speculations have, now and then, overhung the field of literature; but they obstruct not the growth of any plant there: the Shakespeare or the Burns, unconsciously and merely as he walks onward, silently brushes them away. Is not every genius an impossibility till he appear? Why do we call him new and original, if *we* saw where his marble was lying, and what fabric he could rear from it? It is not the material, but the workman, that is wanting. It is not the dark *place* that hinders, but the dim *eye*. A Scot-

tish peasant's life was the meanest and rudest of all lives, till Burns became a poet in it, and a poet of it; found it a *man's* life, and therefore significant to men. A thousand battle-fields remain unsung; but the *Wounded Hare* has not perished without its memorial; a balm of mercy yet breathes on us from its dumb agonies, because a poet was there. Our *Halloween* had passed and repassed, in rude awe and laughter, since the era of the Druids; but no Theocritus, till Burns discerned in it the materials of a Scottish Idyl: neither was the *Holy Fair* any *Council of Trent* or *Roman Jubilee*; but, nevertheless, *Superstition* and *Hypocrisy* and *Fan* having been propitious to him, in this man's hand it became a poem, instinct with satire and genuine comic life. Let but the true poet be given us, we repeat it, place him where and how you will, and true poetry will not be wanting.

Independently of the essential gift of poetic feeling, as we have now attempted to describe it, a certain rugged sterling worth pervades whatever Burns has written; a virtue, as of green fields and mountain breezes, dwells in his poetry; it is redolent of natural life and hardy natural men. There is a decisive strength in him, and yet a sweet native gracefulness: he is tender, he is vehement, yet without constraint or too visible effort; he melts the heart, or inflames it, with a power which seems habit-

ual and familiar to him. We see that in this man there was the gentleness, the trembling pity of a woman, with the deep earnestness, the force and passionate ardor, of a hero. Tears lie in him, and consuming fire; as lightning lurks in the drops of the summer cloud. He has a resonance in his bosom for every note of human feeling; the high and the low, the sad, the ludicrous, the joyful, are welcome in their turns to his "lightly-moved and all-conceiving spirit." And observe with what a fierce, prompt force he grasps his subject, be it what it may! How he fixes, as it were, the full image of the matter in his eye, full and clear in every lin-cament, and catches the real type and essence of it, amid a thousand accidents and superficial circumstances, no one of which misleads him! Is it of reason; some truth to be discovered? No sophistry, no vain surface-logic, detains him; quick, resolute, unerring, he pierces through into the marrow of the question, and speaks his verdict with an emphasis that cannot be forgotten. Is it of description; some visual object to be represented? No poet of any age or nation is more graphic than Burns: the characteristic features disclose themselves to him at a glance; three lines from his hand, and we have a likeness, — and, in that rough dialect, in that rude, often awkward metre, so clear and definite a likeness! It seems a draughtsman working with a burnt stick; and

yet the hurin of a Retzsch is not more expressive or exact.

Of this last excellence, the plainest and most comprehensive of all, being indeed the root and foundation of *every* sort of talent, poetical or intellectual, we could produce innumerable instances from the writings of Burns. Take these glimpses of a snow-storm from his *Winter Night* (the italics are ours) : —

“ When biting Boreas, fell and doure,
Sharp shivers thro’ the leafless bow’r,
 And Phœbus *gives a short-lived glow’r*
Far south the lift,
Dim-dark’ning thro’ the flaky show’r
Or whirling drift :

“ Ae night the storm the steeples rock’d,
 Poor labour sweet in sleep was lock’d,
 While burns *wi’ snawy wreaths upchok’d*
Wild-eddying swirl,
 Or thro’ the mining outlet bock’d
 Down headlong hurl.”

Are there not “descriptive touches” here? The describer *saw* this thing; the essential feature and true likeness of every circumstance in it; saw, and not with the eye only. “Poor labour locked in sweet sleep”; the dead stillness of man, unconscious, vanquished, yet not unprotected, while such strife of the material elements rages, and seems to reign supreme in

loneliness : this is of the heart as well as of the eye ! Look also at his image of a thaw, and prophesied fall of the *Auld Brig* : —

“ When heavy, dark, continued, a’-day rains
 Wi’ deepening deluges o’erflow the plains ;
 When from the hills where springs the brawling Coil,
 Or stately Lugar’s *mossy* fountains *boil*,
 Or where the Greenock winds his *moorland* course,
 Or haunted Garpal * draws his feeble source,
 Arous’d by blust’ring winds and *spotting* thowes,
In mony a torrent down his snaw-broo rows ;
While crashing ice, borne on the roaring spout,
Sweeps dams and mills and brigs a’ to the gate ;
 And, from Glenbuck down to the Rottonkey,
 Auld Ayr is just one lengthen’d *tumbling* sea ;
 Then down ye’ll hurl, Deil nor ye never rise !
 And *dash the gumtie jaups up to the pouring skies.*”

The last line is in itself a Poussin-picture of that deluge ! The welkin has, as it were, bent down with its weight ; the “ gumtie jaups ” and the “ pouring skies ” are mingled together ; it is a world of rain and ruin. In respect of mere clearness and minute fidelity, the *Farmer’s* commendation of his *Auld Mare*, in plough or in cart, may vie with Homer’s Smithy of the Cyclops, or yoking of Priam’s Chariot. Nor have we forgotten stout *Burn-the-wind* and his brawny customers, inspired by *Scotch Drink* : but it is needless to multiply examples. One

* *Fabulosus Hydaspes* !

other trait of a much finer sort we select from multitudes of such among his *Songs*. It gives, in a single line, to the saddest feeling the saddest environment and local habitation: —

*“The pale Moon is setting beyond the white wave,
And Time is setting wi’ me, O;
Farewell, false friends! false lover, farewell!
I’ll nae mair trouble them nor thee, O.”*

This clearness of sight we have called the foundation of all talent; for, in fact, unless we *see* our object, how shall we know how to place or prize it, in our understanding, our imagination, our affections? Yet it is not in itself, perhaps, a very high excellence; but capable of being united indifferently with the strongest, or with ordinary power. Homer surpasses all men in this quality; but, strangely enough, at no great distance below him are Richardson and Defoe. It belongs, in truth, to what is called a lively mind; and gives no sure indication of the higher endowments that may exist along with it. In all the three cases we have mentioned, it is combined with great garrulity; their descriptions are detailed, ample, and lovingly exact; Homer’s fire bursts through, from time to time, as if by accident; but Defoe and Richardson have no fire. Burns, again, is not more distinguished by the clearness than by the impetuous force of his conceptions. Of the strength, the piercing emphasis, with which he

thought, his emphasis of expression may give a humble but the readiest proof. Who ever uttered sharper sayings than his ; words more memorable, now by their burning vehemence, now by their cool vigor and laconic pith ? A single phrase depicts a whole subject, a whole scene. We hear of "a gentleman that derived his patent of nobility direct from Almighty God." Our Scottish forefathers in the battle-field struggled forward "*red-icat-shod*" : in this one word, a full vision of horror and carnage, perhaps too frightfully accurate for art !

In fact, one of the leading features in the mind of Burns is this vigor of his strictly intellectual perceptions. A resolute force is ever visible in his judgments, and in his feelings and volitions. Professor Stewart says of him, with some surprise : "All the faculties of Burns's mind were, as far as I could judge, equally vigorous ; and his predilection for poetry was rather the result of his own enthusiastic and impassioned temper, than of a genius exclusively adapted to that species of composition. From his conversation I should have pronounced him to be fitted to excel in whatever walk of ambition he had chosen to exert his abilities." But this, if we mistake not, is at all times the very essence of a truly poetical endowment. Poetry, except in such cases as that of Keats, where the whole consists in a weak-eyed, maudlin sensibility, and a certain

vague, random tunefulness of nature, is no separate faculty, no organ which can be superadded to the rest, or disjoined from them; but rather the result of their general harmony and completion. The feelings, the gifts that exist in the poet are those that exist, with more or less development, in every human soul: the imagination, which shudders at the Hell of Dante, is the same faculty, weaker in degree, which called that picture into being. How does the poet speak to men, with power, but by being still more a man than they? Shakespeare, it has been well observed, in the planning and completing of his tragedies, has shown an understanding, were it nothing more, which might have governed states, or indited a *Novum Organum*. What Burns's force of understanding may have been, we have less means of judging: it had to dwell among the humblest objects; never saw philosophy; never rose, except by natural effort and for short intervals, into the region of great ideas. Nevertheless, sufficient indication, if no proof sufficient, remains for us in his works: we discern the brawny movements of a gigantic though untutored strength; and can understand how, in conversation, his quick, sure insight into men and things may, as much as aught else about him, have amazed the best thinkers of his time and country.

But, unless we mistake, the intellectual gift

of Burns is fine as well as strong. The more delicate relations of things could not well have escaped his eye, for they were intimately present to his heart. The logic of the senate and the forum is indispensable, but not all-sufficient; nay, perhaps the highest truth is that which will the most certainly elude it. For this logic works by words, and "the highest," it has been said, "cannot be expressed in words." We are not without tokens of an openness for this higher truth also, of a keen though uncultivated sense for it, having existed in Burns. Mr. Stewart, it will be remembered, "wonders," in the passage above quoted, that Burns had formed some distinct conception of the "doctrine of association." We rather think that far subtler things than the doctrine of association had from of old been familiar to him. Here, for instance:—

"We know nothing," thus writes he, "or next to nothing, of the structure of our souls, so we cannot account for those seeming caprices in them, that one should be particularly pleased with this thing, or struck with that, which, on minds of a different cast, makes no extraordinary impression. I have some favorite flowers in spring, among which are the mountain-daisy, the harebell, the foxglove, the wild-brier rose, the budding birch, and the hoary hawthorn, that I view and hang over with particular delight. I never hear the loud

solitary whistle of the curlew in a summer noon, or the wild mixing cadence of a troop of gray plover in an autumnal morning, without feeling an elevation of soul like the enthusiasm of devotion or poetry. Tell me, my dear friend, to what can this be owing? Are we a piece of machinery, which, like the Æolian harp, passive, takes the impression of the passing accident; or do these workings argue something within us above the trodden clod? I own myself partial to such proofs of those awful and important realities; a God that made all things, man's immaterial and immortal nature, and a world of weal or woe beyond death and the grave."

Force and fineness of understanding are often spoken of as something different from general force and fineness of nature, as something partly independent of them. The necessities of language so require it; but in truth these qualities are not distinct and independent; except in special cases, and from special causes, they ever go together. A man of strong understanding is generally a man of strong character, neither is delicacy in the one kind often divided from delicacy in the other. No one, at all events, is ignorant that in the poetry of Burns keenness of insight keeps pace with keenness of feeling, that his *light* is not more pervading than his *warmth*. He is a man of the most impassioned temper, with passions not

strong only, but noble, and of the sort in which great virtues and great poems take their rise. It is reverence, it is love towards all nature, that inspires him, that opens his eyes to its beauty, and makes heart and voice eloquent in its praise. There is a true old saying, that "love furthers knowledge"; but, above all, it is the living essence of that knowledge which makes poets; the first principle of its existence, increase, activity. Of Burns's fervid affection, his generous all-embracing love, we have spoken already, as of the grand distinction of his nature, seen equally in word and deed, in his life and in his writings. It were easy to multiply examples. Not man only, but all that environs man in the material and moral universe, is lovely in his sight: "the hoary hawthorn," the "troop of gray plover," the "solitary curlew," all are dear to him; all live in this earth along with him, and to all he is knit as in mysterious brotherhood. How touching is it, for instance, that amidst the gloom of personal misery brooding over the wintry desolation without him and within him, he thinks of the "ourie cattle" and "silly sheep," and their sufferings in the pitiless storm!

“ I thought me on the ourie cattle,
Or silly sheep, wha bide this brattle
O’ wintry war,
Or thro’ the drift, deep-lairing, sprattle,
Beneath a scaur.

Ilk happing bird, wee helpless thing,
 That in the merry months o' spring
 Delighted me to hear thee sing,
 What comes o' thee?

Where wilt thou cow'r thy chittering wing,
 And close thy ee?"

The tenant of the mean hut, with its "ragged roof and chinky wall," has a heart to pity even these! This is worth several homilies on Mercy; for it is the voice of Mercy herself. Burns, indeed, lives in sympathy; his soul rushes forth into all realms of being; nothing that has existence can be indifferent to him. The very Devil he cannot hate with right orthodoxy:—

"But fare you weel, auld Nickie-ben;
 O, wad ye tak a thought and men'!
 Ye aiblins might, — I dinna ken, —
 Still hae a stake;
 I'm wae to think upo' yon den,
 Even for your sake!"

"*He* is the father of curses and lies," said Dr. Slop, "and is cursed and damned already."
 "I am sorry for it," quoth my uncle Toby!—
 a poet without love were a physical and metaphysical impossibility.

But has it not been said, in contradiction to this principle, that "indignation makes verses"? It has been so said, and is true

enough; but the contradiction is apparent, not real. The indignation which makes verses is, properly speaking, an inverted love; the love of some right, some worth, some goodness, belonging to ourselves or others, which has been injured, and which this tempestuous feeling issues forth to defend and avenge. No selfish fury of heart, existing there as a primary feeling, and without its opposite, ever produced much poetry; otherwise, we suppose, the tiger were the most musical of all our choristers. Johnson said he loved a good hater; by which he must have meant, not so much one that hated violently as one that hated wisely, hated baseness from love of nobleness. However, in spite of Johnson's paradox, tolerable enough for once in speech, but which need not have been so often adopted in print since then, we rather believe that good men deal sparingly in hatred, either wise or unwise; nay, that a "good" hater is still a desideratum in this world. The Devil, at least, who passes for the chief and best of that class, is said to be nowise an amiable character.

Of the verses which indignation makes, Burns has also given us specimens, and among the best that were ever given. Who will forget his *Dweller in yon Dungeon dark*, a piece that might have been chanted by the furies of Æschylus? The secrets of the infer-

nal pit are laid bare; a boundless, baleful
“darkness visible”; and streaks of hell-fire
quivering madly in its black haggard bosom!

“Dweller in yon dungeon dark,
Hangman of Creation, mark!
Who in widow’s weeds appears,
Laden with unhonored years,
Noosing with care a bursting purse,
Baited with many a deadly curse!”

Why should we speak of *Scots, aha hae wi’ Wallace bled*, since all know of it, from the king to the meanest of his subjects? This dithyrambic was composed on horseback, in riding in the middle of tempests, over the wildest Galloway moor, in company with a Mr. Syme, who, observing the poet’s looks, forbore to speak,—judiciously enough, for a man composing *Bruce’s Address* might be unsafe to trifle with. Doubtless this stern hymn was singing itself, as he formed it, through the soul of Burns; but to the external ear it should be sung with the throat of the whirlwind. So long as there is warm blood in the heart of Scotchman or man, it will move in fierce thrills under this war-ode; the best, we believe, that was ever written by any pen.

Another wild, stormful song, that dwells in our ear and mind with a strange tenacity, is *Macpherson’s Farewell*. Perhaps there is something in the tradition itself that co-oper-

ates. For was not this grim Celt, this shaggy Northland Cacus, that "lived a life of sturt and strife, and died by treacherie," — was not he too one of the Nimrods and Napoleons of the earth, in the arena of his own remote misty glens, for want of a clearer and wider one? Nay, was there not a touch of grace given him? A fibre of love and softness, of poetry itself, must have lived in his savage heart: for he composed that air the night before his execution; on the wings of that poor melody his better soul would soar away above oblivion, pain, and all the ignominy and despair which, like an avalanche, was hurling him to the abyss! Here also, as at Thebes and in Pelops' line, was material Fate matched against man's Free-will, matched in bitterest though obscure duel; and the ethereal soul sank not, even in its blindness, without a cry which has survived it. But who, except Burns, could have given words to such a soul; words that we never listen to without a strange, half-barbarous, half-poetic fellow-feeling?

“Sae rantingly, sae wantonly,
Sae dauntingly gaed he;
He play'd a spring, and danced it round,
Below the gallows-tree.”

Under a lighter disguise, the same principle of love, which we have recognized as the great characteristic of Burns and of all true poets,

occasionally manifests itself in the shape of humor. Everywhere, indeed, in his sunny moods, a full, buoyant flood of mirth rolls through the mind of Burns; he rises to the high, and stoops to the low, and is brother and playmate to all Nature. We speak not of his bold and often irresistible faculty of caricature, for this is drollery rather than humor: but a much tenderer sportfulness dwells in him, and comes forth here and there, in evanescent and beautiful touches; as in his *Address to the Mouse*, or the *Farmer's Mare*, or in his *Elegy on poor Mailie*, which last may be reckoned his happiest effort of this kind. In these pieces there are traits of a humor as fine as that of Sterne; yet altogether different, original, peculiar, — the humor of Burns.

Of the tenderness, the playful pathos, and many other kindred qualities of Burns's poetry, much more might be said; but now, with these poor outlines of a sketch, we must prepare to quit this part of our subject. To speak of his individual writings adequately and with any detail would lead us far beyond our limits. As already hinted, we can look on but few of these pieces as, in strict critical language, deserving the name of poems; they are rhymed eloquence, rhymed pathos, rhymed sense, yet seldom essentially melodious, aerial, poetical. *Tam o' Shanter* itself, which enjoys so high a favor, does not appear to us at all decisively to

come under this last category. It is not so much a poem as a piece of sparkling rhetoric; the heart and body of the story still lies hard and dead. He has not gone back, much less carried us back, into that dark, earnest, wondering age, when the tradition was believed and when it took its rise; he does not attempt, by any new-modelling of his supernatural ware, to strike anew that deep mysterious chord of human nature which once responded to such things, and which lives in us too, and will forever live, though silent now, or vibrating with far other notes and to far different issues. Our German readers will understand us when we say that he is not the Tieck but the Musäus of this tale. Externally it is all green and living; yet look closer, it is no firm growth, but only ivy on a rock. The piece does not properly cohere: the strange chasm which yawns in our incredulous imaginations between the Ayr public-house and the gate of Tophet is nowhere bridged over, nay, the idea of such a bridge is laughed at; and thus the tragedy of the adventure becomes a mere drunken phantasmagoria, or many-colored spectrum painted on ale-vapors, and the farce alone has any reality. We do not say that Burns should have made much more of this tradition; we rather think that, for strictly poetical purposes, not much *was* to be made of it. Neither are we blind to the deep, varied, genial power

displayed in what he has actually accomplished ; but we find far more "Shakespearean" qualities, as these of *Tam o' Shanter* have been fondly named, in many of his other pieces ; nay, we incline to believe that this latter might have been written, all but quite as well, by a man who, in place of genius, had only possessed talent.

Perhaps we may venture to say that the most strictly poetical of all his "poems" is one which does not appear in Currie's edition, but has been often printed before and since under the humble title of *The Jolly Beggars*. The subject truly is among the lowest in nature ; but it only the more shows our poet's gift in raising it into the domain of art. To our minds, this piece seems thoroughly compacted, melted together, refined, and poured forth in one flood of true *liquid* harmony. It is light, airy, soft of movement, yet sharp and precise in its details ; every face is a portrait : that *raucle carlin*, that *wee Apollo*, that *Son of Mars*, are Scottish, yet ideal ; the scene is at once a dream, and the very Rag-castle of "Poosie-Nansie." Farther, it seems in a considerable degree complete, a real self-supporting whole, which is the highest merit in a poem. The blanket of the night is drawn asunder for a moment ; in full, ruddy, flaming light, these rough tatterdemalions are seen in their boisterous revel, for the strong pulse of

life vindicates its right to gladness even here, and when the curtain closes we prolong the action without effort : the next day, as the last, our *Caird* and our *Ballad-monger* are singing and soldiering ; their “ brats and callets ” are hawking, begging, cheating ; and some other night, in new combinations, they will wring from Fate another hour of wassail and good cheer. Apart from the universal sympathy with man which this again bespeaks in Burns, a genuine inspiration and no inconsiderable technical talent are manifested here. There is the fidelity, humor, warm life, and accurate painting and grouping of some Teniers, for whom hostlers and carousing peasants are not without significance. It would be strange, doubtless, to call this the best of Burns’s writings : we mean to say only that it seems to us the most perfect of its kind, as a piece of poetical composition, strictly so called. In the *Beggars’ Opera*, in the *Beggars’ Bush*, as other critics have already remarked, there is nothing which, in real poetic vigor, equals this *Cantata* ; nothing, as we think, which comes within many degrees of it.

But by far the most finished, complete, and truly inspired pieces of Burns are, without dispute, to be found among his *Songs*. It is here that, although through a small aperture, his light shines with least obstruction, in its

highest beauty and pure sunny clearness. The reason may be that song is a brief, simple species of composition, and requires nothing so much for its perfection as genuine poetic feeling, genuine music of heart. Yet the song has its rules equally with the tragedy; rules which in most cases are poorly fulfilled, in many cases are not so much as felt. We might write a long essay on the songs of Burns, which we reckon by far the best that Britain has yet produced; for indeed, since the era of Queen Elizabeth, we know not that, by any other hand, aught truly worth attention has been accomplished in this department. True, we have songs enough "by persons of quality"; we have tawdry, hollow, wine-bred madrigals; many a rhymed speech "in the flowing and watery vein of Ossorius the Portuguese Bishop," rich in sonorous words, and, for moral, dashed perhaps with some tint of a sentimental sensuality; all which many persons cease not from endeavoring to sing, though for most part, we fear, the music is but from the throat outwards, or at best from some region far enough short of the *soul*; not in which, but in a certain inane limbo of the fancy, or even in some vaporous debatable land on the outskirts of the nervous system, most of such madrigals and rhymed speeches seem to have originated.

With the songs of Burns we must not name

these things. Independently of the clear, manly, heartfelt sentiment that ever pervades *his* poetry, his songs are honest in another point of view ; in form, as well as in spirit. They do not *affect* to be set to music, but they actually and in themselves are music ; they have received their life, and fashioned themselves together, in the medium of harmony, as Venus rose from the bosom of the sea. The story, the feeling, is not detailed, but suggested ; not *said*, or spouted, in rhetorical completeness and coherence ; but *sung*, in fitful gushes, in glowing hints, in fantastic breaks, in *warblings*, not of the voice only, but of the whole mind. We consider this to be the essence of a song ; and that no songs since the little careless catches, and as it were drops of song, which Shakespeare has here and there sprinkled over his plays, fulfil this condition in nearly the same degree as most of Burns's do. Such grace and truth of external movement, too, presupposes in general a corresponding force and truth of sentiment and inward meaning. The songs of Burns are not more perfect in the former quality than in the latter. With what tenderness he sings, yet with what vehemence and entireness ! There is a piercing wail in his sorrow, the purest rapture in his joy ; he burns with the sternest ire, or laughs with the loudest or slyest mirth ; and yet he is sweet and soft, " sweet as the smile when fond lovers

meet, and soft as their parting tear." If we further take into account the immense variety of his subjects, — how, from the loud flowing revel in *Willie brew'd a Peck o' Maut* to the still, rapt enthusiasm of sadness for *Mary in Heaven*; from the glad, kind greeting of *Auld Lang Syne*, or the comic archness of *Duncan Gray*, to the fire-eyed fury of *Scots wha hae wi' Wallace bled*, he has found a tone and words for every mood of man's heart, — it will seem a small praise if we rank him as the first of all our song-writers; for we know not where to find one worthy of being second to him.

It is on his songs, as we believe, that Burns's chief influence as an author will ultimately be found to depend; nor, if our Fletcher's aphorism is true, shall we account this a small influence. "Let me make the songs of a people," said he, "and you shall make its laws." Surely, if ever any poet might have equalled himself with legislators on this ground, it was Burns. His songs are already part of the mother-tongue, not of Scotland only, but of Britain, and of the millions that in all ends of the earth speak a British language. In hut and hall, as the heart unfolds itself in many-colored joy and woe of existence, the *name*, the *voice*, of that joy and that woe is the name and voice which Burns has given them. Strictly speaking, perhaps no British man has so deeply

affected the thoughts and feelings of so many men as this solitary and altogether private individual, with means apparently the humblest.

In another point of view, moreover, we incline to think that Burns's influence may have been considerable ; we mean, as exerted specially on the literature of his country, at least on the literature of Scotland. Among the great changes which British, particularly Scottish, literature has undergone since that period, one of the greatest will be found to consist in its remarkable increase of nationality. Even the English writers most popular in Burns's time were little distinguished for their literary patriotism, in this its best sense. A certain attenuated cosmopolitanism had, in good measure, taken place of the old insular home-feeling ; literature was, as it were, without any local environment ; was not nourished by the affections which spring from a native soil. Our Grays and Glovers seemed to write almost as if *in vacuo* ; the thing written bears no mark of place ; it is not written so much for Englishmen as for men, or rather, which is the inevitable result of this, for certain generalizations which philosophy termed men. Goldsmith is an exception : not so Johnson ; the scene of his *Rambler* is little more English than that of his *Rasselas*.

But if such was, in some degree, the case with England, it was, in the highest degree,

the case with Scotland. In fact, our Scottish literature had, at that period, a very singular aspect; unexampled, so far as we know, except perhaps at Geneva, where the same state of matters appears still to continue. For a long period after Scotland became British, we had no literature: at the date when Addison and Steele were writing their *Spectators*, our good John Boston was writing, with the noblest intent, but alike in defiance of grammar and philosophy, his *Fourfold State of Man*. Then came the schisms in our national church, and the fiercer schisms in our body politic; theologic ink, and Jacobite blood, with gall enough in both cases, seemed to have blotted out the intellect of the country: however, it was only obscured, not obliterated. Lord Kames made nearly the first attempt at writing English; and ere long Hume, Robertson, Smith, and a whole host of followers, attracted hither the eyes of all Europe. And yet, in this brilliant resuscitation of our "fervid genius," there was nothing truly Scottish, nothing indigenous; except, perhaps, the natural impetuosity of intellect, which we sometimes claim, and are sometimes upbraided with, as a characteristic of our nation. It is curious to remark that Scotland, so full of writers, had no Scottish culture, nor indeed any English; our culture was almost exclusively French. It was by studying Racine and Voltaire, Batteux and Boileau, that

Kames had trained himself to be a critic and philosopher ; it was the light of Montesquieu and Mably that guided Robertson in his political speculations ; Quesnay's lamp that kindled the lamp of Adam Smith. Hume was too rich a man to borrow ; and perhaps he reacted on the French more than he was acted on by them : but neither had he aught to do with Scotland ; Edinburgh, equally with La Flèche, was but the lodging and laboratory in which he not so much morally *lived*, as metaphysically *investigated*. Never, perhaps, was there a class of writers so clear and well-ordered, yet so totally destitute, to all appearance, of any patriotic affection, nay, of any human affection whatever. The French wits of the period were as unpatriotic ; but their general deficiency in moral principle, not to say their avowed sensuality and unbelief in all virtue, strictly so called, render this accountable enough. We hope there is a patriotism founded on something better than prejudice ; that our country may be dear to us without injury to our philosophy ; that in loving and justly prizing all other lands we may prize justly, and yet love before all others, our own stern motherland, and the venerable structure of social and moral life, which mind has through long ages been building up for us there. Surely there is nourishment for the better part of man's heart in all this ; surely the roots, that have fixed them-

selves in the very core of man's being, may be so cultivated as to grow up, not into briars, but into roses, in the field of his life ! Our Scottish sages have no such propensities : the field of their life shows neither briars nor roses ; but only a flat, continuous thrashing-floor for logic, whereon all questions, from the " Doctrine of Rent " to the " Natural History of Religion," are thrashed and sifted with the same mechanical impartiality !

With Sir Walter Scott at the head of our literature, it cannot be denied that much of this evil is past, or rapidly passing away : our chief literary men, whatever other faults they may have, no longer live among us like a French colony, or some knot of Propaganda missionaries, but, like natural-born subjects of the soil, partaking and sympathizing in all our attachments, humors, and habits. Our literature no longer grows in water, but in mould, and with the true racy virtues of the soil and climate. How much of this change may be due to Burns, or to any other individual, it might be difficult to estimate. Direct literary imitation of Burns was not to be looked for. But his example, in the fearless adoption of domestic subjects, could not but operate from afar ; and certainly in no heart did the love of country ever burn with a warmer glow than in that of Burns : " a tide of Scottish prejudice," as he modestly calls this deep and generous feeling, " had been poured

along his veins ; and he felt that it would boil there till the floodgates shut in eternal rest." It seemed to him as if *he* could do so little for his country, and yet would so gladly have done all. One small province stood open for him, — that of Scottish song ; and how eagerly he entered on it, how devotedly he labored there ! In his toilsome journeyings, this object never quits him ; it is the little happy-valley of his careworn heart. In the gloom of his own affliction he eagerly searches after some lonely brother of the Muse, and rejoices to snatch one other name from the oblivion that was covering it ! These were early feelings, and they abode with him to the end : —

“ A wish (I mind its power),
A wish that to my latest hour
Will strongly heave my breast, —
That I, for poor auld Scotland's sake,
Some useful plan or book could make,
Or sing a sang at least.

“ The rough bur Thistle spreading wide
Amang the bearded bear,
I turn'd my weeding-clips aside,
And spared the symbol dear.”

But to leave the mere literary character of Burns, which has already detained us too long. Far more interesting than any of his written works, as it appears to us, are his acted ones, —

the life he willed and was fated to lead among his fellow-men. These poems are but like little rhymed fragments scattered here and there in the grand unrhymed romance of his earthly existence; and it is only when intercalated in this, at their proper places, that they attain their full measure of significance. And this too, alas, was but a fragment! The plan of a mighty edifice had been sketched; some columns, porticos, firm masses of building, stand completed; the rest more or less clearly indicated, with many a far-stretching tendency, which only studious and friendly eyes can now trace, towards the purposed termination. For the work is broken off in the middle, almost in the beginning; and rises among us, beautiful and sad, at once unfinished and a ruin! If charitable judgment was necessary in estimating his poems, and justice required that the aim and the manifest power to fulfil it must often be accepted for the fulfilment, much more is this the case in regard to his life, the sum and result of all his endeavors, where his difficulties came upon him not in detail only, but in mass; and so much has been left unaccomplished, nay, was mistaken, and altogether marred.

Properly speaking, there is but one era in the life of Burns, and that the earliest. We have not youth and manhood, but only youth: for, to the end, we discern no decisive change

in the complexion of his character; in his thirty-seventh year he is still, as it were, in youth. With all that resoluteness of judgment, that penetrating insight, and singular maturity of intellectual power, exhibited in his writings, he never attains to any clearness regarding himself; to the last, he never ascertains his peculiar aim, even with such distinctness as is common among ordinary men, and therefore never can pursue it with that singleness of will which insures success and some contentment to such men. To the last, he wavers between two purposes: glorying in his talent, like a true poet, he yet cannot consent to make this his chief and sole glory, and to follow it, as the one thing needful, through poverty or riches, through good or evil report. Another far meaner ambition still cleaves to him: he must dream and struggle about a certain "Rock of Independence," which, natural and even admirable as it might be, was still but a warring with the world, on the comparatively insignificant ground of his being more completely or less completely supplied with money than others, of his standing at a higher or at a lower altitude in general estimation than others. For the world still appears to him, as to the young, in borrowed colors: he expects from it what it cannot give to any man; seeks for contentment, not within himself, in action and wise effort, but from with-

out, in the kindness of circumstances, in love, friendship, honor, pecuniary ease. He would be happy, not actively and in himself, but passively and from some ideal cornucopia of enjoyments, not earned by his own labor, but showered on him by the beneficence of Destiny. Thus, like a young man, he cannot gird himself up for any worthy well-calculated goal, but swerves to and fro, between passionate hope and remorseful disappointment: rushing onwards with a deep tempestuous force, he surmounts or breaks asunder many a barrier; travels, nay, advances far, but, advancing only under uncertain guidance, is ever and anon turned from his path, and to the last cannot reach the only true happiness of a man, — that of clear, decided activity in the sphere for which, by nature and circumstances, he has been fitted and appointed.

We do not say these things in dispraise of Burns; nay, perhaps they but interest us the more in his favor. This blessing is not given soonest to the best, but rather it is often the greatest minds that are latest in obtaining it; for where most is to be developed, most time may be required to develop it. A complex condition had been assigned him from without, as complex a condition from within: no “pre-established harmony” existed between the clay soil of Moss-giel and the empyrean soul of Robert Burns; it was not wonderful that

the adjustment between them should have been long postponed, and his arm long cumbered, and his sight confused, in so vast and discordant an economy as he had been appointed steward over. Byron was, at his death, but a year younger than Burns, and through life, as it might have appeared, far more simply situated; yet in him too we can trace no such adjustment, no such moral manhood, but at best, and only a little before his end, the beginning of what seemed such.

By much the most striking incident in Burns's life is his journey to Edinburgh; but perhaps a still more important one is his residence at Irvine, so early as in his twenty-third year. Hitherto his life had been poor and toil-worn, but otherwise not ungenial, and, with all its distresses, by no means unhappy. In his parentage, deducting outward circumstances, he had every reason to reckon himself fortunate. His father was a man of thoughtful, intense, earnest character, as the best of our peasants are; valuing knowledge, possessing some, and, what is far better and rarer, open-minded for more; a man with a keen insight and devout heart; reverent towards God, friendly therefore at once, and fearless towards all that God has made; in one word, though but a hard-handed peasant, a complete and fully unfolded *man*. Such a father is seldom found in any rank in society, and was worth descending

far in society to seek. Unfortunately, he was very poor; had he been even a little richer, almost never so little, the whole might have issued far otherwise. Mighty events turn on a straw; the crossing of a brook decides the conquest of the world. Had this William Burns's small seven acres of nursery-ground anyway prospered, the boy Robert had been sent to school; had struggled forward, as so many weaker men do, to some university; come forth, not as a rustic wonder, but as a regular well-trained intellectual workman, and changed the whole course of British literature, — for it lay in him to have done this! But the nursery did not prosper; poverty sank his whole family below the help of even our cheap school-system; Burns remained a hard-worked plough-boy, and British literature took its own course. Nevertheless, even in this rugged scene there is much to nourish him. If he drudges, it is with his brother, and for his father and mother, whom he loves, and would fain shield from want. Wisdom is not banished from their poor hearth, nor the balm of natural feeling; the solemn words, *Let us worship God*, are heard there from a "priest-like father"; if threatenings of unjust men throw mother and children into tears, these are tears, not of grief only, but of holiest affection; every heart in that humble group feels itself the closer knit to every other; in their hard

warfare they are there together, a "little band of brethren." Neither are such tears, and the deep beauty that dwells in them, their only portion. Light visits the hearts as it does the eyes of all living: there is a force, too, in this youth, that enables him to trample on misfortune; nay, to bind it under his feet to make him sport. For a bold, warm, buoyant humor of character has been given him; and so the thick-coming shapes of evil are welcomed with a gay, friendly irony, and in their closest pressure he bates no jot of heart or hope. Vague yearnings of ambition fail not as he grows up; dreamy fancies hang like cloud-cities around him; the curtain of existence is slowly rising, in many-colored splendor and gloom; and the auroral light of first love is gilding his horizon, and the music of song is on his path; and so he walks

"In glory and in joy,
Behind his plough, upon the mountain side."

We ourselves know, from the best evidence, that up to this date Burns was happy; nay, that he was the gayest, brightest, most fantastic, fascinating being to be found in the world, more so even than he ever afterwards appeared. But now, at this early age, he quits the paternal roof; goes forth into looser, louder, more exciting society; and becomes initiated in those dissipations, those vices, which a certain class

of philosophers have asserted to be a natural preparative for entering on active life, — a kind of mud-bath, in which the youth is, as it were, necessitated to steep, and, we suppose, cleanse himself, before the real toga of manhood can be laid on him. We shall not dispute much with this class of philosophers : we hope they are mistaken ; for sin and remorse so easily beset us at all stages of life, and are always such indifferent company, that it seems hard we should, at any stage, be forced and fated not only to meet but to yield to them, and even serve for a term in their leprous armada. We hope it is not so. Clear we are, at all events, it cannot be the training one receives in this Devil's-service, but only our determining to desert from it, that fits us for true manly action. We become men, not after we have been dissipated, and disappointed in the chase of false pleasure, but after we have ascertained, in any way, what impassable barriers hem us in through this life, how mad it is to hope for contentment to our infinite soul from the *gifts* of this extremely finite world, that a man must be sufficient for himself, and that for suffering and enduring there is no remedy but striving and doing. Manhood begins when we have in any way made truce with necessity ; begins even when we have surrendered to necessity, as the most part only do ; but begins joyfully and hopefully only when we have rec-

onciled ourselves to necessity, and thus, in reality, triumphed over it, and felt that in necessity we are free. Surely, such lessons as this last, which in one shape or other is the grand lesson for every mortal man, are better learned from the lips of a devout mother, in the looks and actions of a devout father, while the heart is yet soft and pliant, than in collision with the sharp adamant of fate, attracting us to shipwreck us, when the heart is grown hard, and may be broken before it will become contrite. Had Burns continued to learn this, as he was already learning it, in his father's cottage, he would have learned it fully, which he never did; and been saved many a lasting aberration, many a bitter hour and year of remorseful sorrow.

It seems to us another circumstance of fatal import in Burns's history that at this time, too, he became involved in the religious quarrels of his district; that he was enlisted and feasted as the fighting man of the New-Light Priesthood, in their highly unprofitable warfare. At the tables of these free-minded clergy he learned much more than was needful for him. Such liberal ridicule of fanaticism awakened in his mind scruples about religion itself; and a whole world of doubts, which it required quite another set of conjurers than these men to exorcise. We do not say that such an intellect as his could have escaped similar doubts at

some period of his history, or even that he could, at a later period, have come through them altogether victorious and unharmed; but it seems peculiarly unfortunate that this time, above all others, should have been fixed for the encounter. For now, with principles assailed by evil example from without, by "passions raging like demons" from within, he had little need of sceptical misgivings to whisper treason in the heat of the battle, or to cut off his retreat if he were already defeated. He loses his feeling of innocence; his mind is at variance with itself; the old divinity no longer presides there, but wild desires and wild repentance alternately oppress him. Erelong, too, he has committed himself before the world; his character for sobriety, dear to a Scottish peasant as few corrupted worldlings can even conceive, is destroyed in the eyes of men; and his only refuge consists in trying to disbelieve his guiltiness, and is but a refuge of lies. The blackest desperation now gathers over him, broken only by red lightnings of remorse. The whole fabric of his life is blasted asunder; for now not only his character, but his personal liberty, is to be lost; men and fortune are leagued for his hurt; "hungry Ruin has him in the wind." He sees no escape but the saddest of all, — exile from his loved country to a country in every sense inhospitable and abhorrent to him. While the "gloomy night is gathering fast," in mental

storm and solitude, as well as in physical, he sings his wild farewell to Scotland : —

“ Farewell, my friends ; farewell, my foes !
My peace with these, my love with those :
The bursting tears my heart declare ;
Adieu my native banks of Ayr ! ”

Light breaks suddenly in on him in floods, but still a false, transitory light, and no real sunshine. He is invited to Edinburgh ; hastens thither with anticipating heart ; is welcomed as in a triumph, and with universal blandishment and acclamation ; whatever is wisest, whatever is greatest or loveliest there, gathers round him, to gaze on his face, to show him honor, sympathy, affection. Burns's appearance among the sages and nobles of Edinburgh must be regarded as one of the most singular phenomena in modern literature ; almost like the appearance of some Napoleon among the crowned sovereigns of modern politics. For it is no-wise as “ a mockery king,” set there by favor, transiently and for a purpose, that he will let himself be treated ; still less is he a mad Rienzi whose sudden elevation turns his too weak head ; but he stands there on his own basis, cool, unastonished, holding his equal rank from Nature herself, putting forth no claim which there is not strength *in* him, as well as about him, to vindicate. Mr. Lockhart has some forcible observations on this point : —

“It needs no effort of imagination,” says he, “to conceive what the sensations of an isolated set of scholars (almost all either clergymen or professors) must have been in the presence of this big-boned, black-browed, brawny stranger, with his great flashing eyes, who, having forced his way among them from the plough-tail at a single stride, manifested in the whole strain of his bearing and conversation a most thorough conviction that in the society of the most eminent men of his nation he was exactly where he was entitled to be; hardly deigned to flatter them by exhibiting even an occasional symptom of being flattered by their notice; by turns calmly measured himself against the most cultivated understandings of his time in discussion; overpowered the *bon-mots* of the most celebrated convivialists by broad floods of merriment, impregnated with all the burning life of genius; astounded bosoms habitually enveloped in the thrice-piled folds of social reserve, by compelling them to tremble — nay, to tremble visibly — beneath the fearless touch of natural pathos; and all this without indicating the smallest willingness to be ranked among those professional ministers of excitement who are content to be paid in money and smiles for doing what the spectators and auditors would be ashamed of doing in their own persons, even if they had the power of doing it; and last, and probably

worst of all, who was known to be in the habit of enlivening societies which they would have scorned to approach, still more frequently than their own, with eloquence no less magnificent ; with wit in all likelihood still more daring ; often enough, as the superiors whom he fronted without alarm might have guessed from the beginning, and had ere long no occasion to guess, with wit pointed at themselves."

The farther we remove from this scene, the more singular will it seem to us ; details of the exterior aspect of it are already full of interest. Most readers recollect Mr. Walker's personal interviews with Burns as among the best passages of his Narrative. A time will come when this reminiscence of Sir Walter Scott's, slight though it is, will also be precious : —

"As for Burns," writes Sir Walter, "I may truly say, *Virgilium vidi tantùm*. I was a lad of fifteen in 1786-7, when he came first to Edinburgh, but had sense and feeling enough to be much interested in his poetry, and would have given the world to know him ; but I had very little acquaintance with any literary people, and still less with the gentry of the west country, the two sets that he most frequented. Mr. Thomas Grierson was at that time a clerk of my father's. He knew Burns, and promised to ask him to his lodgings to dinner, but had no opportunity to keep his word ; otherwise I might have seen more of this distinguished

man. As it was, I saw him one day at the late venerable Professor Ferguson's, where there were several gentlemen of literary reputation, among whom I remember the celebrated Mr. Dugald Stewart. Of course we youngsters sat silent, looked and listened. The only thing I remember which was remarkable in Burns's manner was the effect produced upon him by a print of Bunbury's, representing a soldier lying dead on the snow, his dog sitting in misery on one side, — on the other, his widow, with a child in her arms. These lines were written beneath: —

“Cold on Canadian hills, or Minden's plain,
Perhaps that mother wept her soldier slain;
Bent o'er her babe, her eye dissolved in dew,
The big drops mingling with the milk he drew,
Gave the sad presage of his future years,
The child of misery baptized in tears.”

“Burns seemed much affected by the print, or rather by the ideas which it suggested to his mind. He actually shed tears. He asked whose the lines were; and it chanced that nobody but myself remembered that they occur in a half-forgotten poem of Lainghorne's called by the unpromising title of “The Justice of Peace.” I whispered my information to a friend present; he mentioned it to Burns, who rewarded me with a look and a word, which, though of mere civility, I then received and still recollect with very great pleasure.

“His person was strong and robust; his manners rustic, not clownish; a sort of dignified plainness and simplicity, which received part of its effect perhaps from one’s knowledge of his extraordinary talents. His features are represented in Mr. Nasmyth’s picture; but to me it conveys the idea that they are diminished, as if seen in perspective. I think his countenance was more massive than it looks in any of the portraits. I should have taken the poet, had I not known what he was, for a very sagacious country farmer of the old Scotch school, *i.e.* none of your modern agriculturalists who keep laborers for their drudgery, but the *douce gudeman* who held his own plough. There was a strong expression of sense and shrewdness in all his lineaments; the eye alone, I think, indicated the poetical character and temperament. It was large, and of a dark cast, which glowed (I say literally *glowed*) when he spoke with feeling or interest. I never saw such another eye in a human head, though I have seen the most distinguished men of my time. His conversation expressed perfect self-confidence, without the slightest presumption. Among the men who were the most learned of their time and country, he expressed himself with perfect firmness, but without the least intrusive forwardness; and when he differed in opinion, he did not hesitate to express it firmly, yet at the same time with modesty. I do not

remember any part of his conversation distinctly enough to be quoted; nor did I ever see him again, except in the street, where he did not recognize me, as I could not expect he should. He was much caressed in Edinburgh: but (considering what literary emoluments have been since his day) the efforts made for his relief were extremely trifling.

“I remember, on this occasion I mention, I thought Burns’s acquaintance with English poetry was rather limited; and also that, having twenty times the abilities of Allan Ramsay and of Ferguson, he talked of them with too much humility as his models: there was doubtless national predilection in his estimate.

“This is all I can tell you about Burns. I have only to add, that his dress corresponded with his manner. He was like a farmer dressed in his best to dine with the laird. I do not speak *in malam partem* when I say I never saw a man, in company with his superiors in station or information, more perfectly free from either the reality or the affectation of embarrassment. I was told, but did not observe it, that his address to females was extremely deferential, and always with a turn either to the pathetic or humorous, which engaged their attention particularly. I have heard the late Duchess of Gordon remark this. I do not know anything I can add to these recollections of forty years since.”

The conduct of Burns under this dazzling blaze of favor, the calm, unaffected, manly manner in which he not only bore it, but estimated its value, has justly been regarded as the best proof that could be given of his real vigor and integrity of mind. A little natural vanity, some touches of hypocritical modesty, some glimmerings of affectation, at least some fear of being thought affected, we could have pardoned in almost any man; but no such indication is to be traced here. In his unexampled situation the young peasant is not a moment perplexed; so many strange lights do not confuse him, do not lead him astray. Nevertheless we cannot but perceive that this winter did him great and lasting injury. A somewhat clearer knowledge of men's affairs, scarcely of their characters, it did afford him; but a sharper feeling of Fortune's unequal arrangements in their social destiny it also left with him. He had seen the gay and gorgeous arena in which the powerful are born to play their parts, nay, had himself stood in the midst of it; and he felt more bitterly than ever that here he was but a looker-on, and had no part or lot in that splendid game. From this time a jealous, indignant fear of social degradation takes possession of him, and perverts, so far as aught could pervert, his private contentment, and his feelings towards his richer fellows. It was clear to Burns that he had talent enough

to make a fortune, or a hundred fortunes, could he but have rightly willed this; it was clear also that he willed something far different, and therefore could not make one. Unhappy it was that he had not power to choose the one and reject the other, but must halt forever between two opinions, two objects, making hampered advancement towards either. But so is it with many men: we "long for the merchandise, yet would fain keep the price"; and so stand chaffering with Fate, in vexatious altercation, till the night come, and our fair is over!

The Edinburgh learned of that period were in general more noted for clearness of head than for warmth of heart: with the exception of the good old Blacklock, whose help was too ineffectual, scarcely one among them seems to have looked at Burns with any true sympathy, or indeed much otherwise than as a highly curious *thing*. By the great also he is treated in the customary fashion; entertained at their tables and dismissed; certain modica of pudding and praise are, from time to time, gladly exchanged for the fascination of his presence, which exchange once effected, the bargain is finished, and each party goes his several way. At the end of this strange season, Burns gloomily sums up his gains and losses, and meditates on the chaotic future. In money he is somewhat richer; in fame and the show

of happiness, infinitely richer ; but in the substance of it, as poor as ever. Nay, poorer, for his heart is now maddened still more with the fever of worldly ambition ; and through long years the disease will rack him with unprofitable sufferings, and weaken his strength for all true and noble aims.

What Burns was next to do or to avoid, how a man so circumstanced was now to guide himself towards his true advantage, might at this point of time have been a question for the wisest. It was a question, too, which apparently he was left altogether to answer for himself ; of his learned or rich patrons it had not struck any individual to turn a thought on this so trivial matter. Without claiming for Burns the praise of perfect sagacity, we must say that his excise and farm scheme does not seem to us a very unreasonable one ; that we should be at a loss, even now, to suggest one decidedly better. Certain of his admirers have felt scandalized at his ever resolving to *gauge* ; and would have had him lie at the pool, till the spirit of patronage stirred the waters, that so, with one friendly plunge, all his sorrows might be healed. Unwise counsellors ! . They know not the manner of this spirit ; and how, in the lap of most golden dreams, a man might have happiness, were it not that in the interim he must die of hunger ! It reflects credit on the manliness and sound sense of Burns that

he felt so early on what ground he was standing, and preferred self-help, on the humblest scale, to dependence and inaction, though with hope of far more splendid possibilities. But even these possibilities were not rejected in his scheme: he might expect, if it chanced that he *had* any friend, to rise, in no long period, into something even like opulence and leisure; while again, if it chanced that he had no friend, he could still live in security; and for the rest, he "did not intend to borrow honor from any profession." We reckon that his plan was honest and well calculated: all turned on the execution of it. Doubtless it failed; yet not, we believe, from any vice inherent in itself. Nay, after all, it was no failure of external means, but of internal, that overtook Burns. His was no bankruptcy of the purse, but of the soul; to his last day he owed no man anything.

Meanwhile he begins well, with two good and wise actions. His donation to his mother, munificent from a man whose income had lately been seven pounds a year, was worthy of him, and not more than worthy. Generous also, and worthy of him, was the treatment of the woman whose life's welfare now depended on his pleasure. A friendly observer might have hoped serene days for him: his mind is on the true road to peace with itself; what clearness he still wants will be given as he proceeds, for

the best teacher of duties that still lie dim to us is the practice of those we see and have at hand. Had the "patrons of genius," who could give him nothing, but taken nothing from him, at least nothing more! The wounds of his heart would have healed, vulgar ambition would have died away. Toil and Frugality would have been welcome, since Virtue dwelt with them; and Poetry would have shone through them as of old, and in her clear, ethereal light, which was his own by birthright, he might have looked down on his earthly destiny, and all its obstructions, not with patience only, but with love.

But the patrons of genius would not have it so. Picturesque tourists,* all manner of fashionable dangles after literature, and, far worse,

* There is one little sketch by certain "English gentlemen" of this class, which, though adopted in Currie's Narrative, and since then repeated in most others, we have all along felt an invincible disposition to regard as imaginary: "On a rock that projected into the stream they saw a man, employed in angling, of a singular appearance. He had a cap made of fox-skin on his head, a loose greatcoat fixed round him by a belt, from which depended an enormous Highland broad-sword. It was Burns." Now, we rather think, it was *not* Burns. For, to say nothing of the fox-skin cap, the loose and quite Hibernian watchcoat with the belt, what are we to make of this "enormous Highland broad-sword" depending from him? More especially, as there is no word of parish constables on the outlook to see whether, as Dennis phrases it, he had an eye to his own midriff or that of the public! Burns, of all men, had the least need, and the least tendency, to seek for distinction, either in his own eyes, or those of others, by such poor mummeries.

all manner of convivial Mæcenases, hovered round him in his retreat ; and his good as well as his weak qualities secured them influence over him. He was flattered by their notice ; and his warm social nature made it impossible for him to shake them off, and hold on his way apart from them. These men, as we believe, were proximately the means of his ruin. Not that they meant him any ill : they only meant themselves a little good ; if he suffered harm, let *him* look to it ! But they wasted his precious time and his precious talent ; they disturbed his composure, broke down his returning habits of temperance and assiduous, contented exertion. Their pampering was baneful to him ; their cruelty, which soon followed, was equally baneful. The old grudge against Fortune's inequality awoke with new bitterness in their neighborhood ; and Burns had no retreat but to "the Rock of Independence," which is but an air-castle after all, that looks well at a distance, but will screen no one from real wind and wet. Flushed with irregular excitement, exasperated alternately by contempt of others and contempt of himself, Burns was no longer regaining his peace of mind, but fast losing it forever. There was a hollowness at the heart of his life, for his conscience did not now approve what he was doing.

Amid the vapors of unwise enjoyment, of bootless remorse, and angry discontent with

Fate, his true loadstar, a life of poetry, with poverty, nay, with famine if it must be so, was too often altogether hidden from his eyes. And yet he sailed a sea where, without some such loadstar, there was no right steering. Meteors of French politics rise before him, but these were not *his* stars. An accident this, which hastened, but did not originate, his worst distresses. In the mad contentions of that time, he comes in collision with certain official superiors; is wounded by them; cruelly lacerated, we should say, could a dead mechanical implement, in any case, be called cruel; and shrinks, in indignant pain, into deeper self-seclusion, into gloomier moodiness than ever. His life has now lost its unity: it is a life of fragments; led with little aim, beyond the melancholy one of securing its own continuance, — in fits of wild, false joy when such offered, and of black despondency when they passed away. His character before the world begins to suffer: calumny is busy with him; for a miserable man makes more enemies than friends. Some faults he has fallen into, and a thousand misfortunes; but deep criminality is what he stands accused of, and they that are *not* without sin cast the first stone at him! For is he not a well-wisher to the French Revolution, a Jacobin, and therefore in that one act guilty of all? These accusations, political and moral, it has since appeared, were false enough; but the

world hesitated little to credit them. Nay, his convivial Mæcenases themselves were not the last to do it. There is reason to believe that, in his later years, the Dumfries aristocracy had partly withdrawn themselves from Burns, as from a tainted person, no longer worthy of their acquaintance. That painful class, stationed, in all provincial cities, behind the outmost breastwork of gentility, there to stand siege and do battle against the intrusions of Grocerdom and Graziardom, had actually seen dishonor in the society of Burns, and branded him with their veto; had, as we vulgarly say, *cut* him! We find one passage in this work of Mr. Lockhart's, which will not out of our thoughts:—

“A gentleman of that county, whose name I have already more than once had occasion to refer to, has often told me that he was seldom more grieved than when, riding into Dumfries one fine summer evening about this time to attend a county ball, he saw Burns walking alone, on the shady side of the principal street of the town, while the opposite side was gay with successive groups of gentlemen and ladies, all drawn together for the festivities of the night, not one of whom appeared willing to recognize him. The horseman dismounted, and joined Burns, who, on his proposing to cross the street, said: “Nay, nay, my young friend, that’s all over now”; and quoted, after

a pause, some verses of Lady Grizzel Baillie's pathetic ballad:—

“His bonnet stood ance fu’ fair on his brow,
His auld ane look’d better than mony ane’s new;
But now he lets ’t wear ony way it will hing,
And casts himsell dowie upon the corn-bing.

“O, were we young as we ance hae been,
We sud hae been galloping down on yon green,
And linking it ower the lily-white lea!
And werena my heart light, I wad die.”

It was little in Burns's character to let his feelings on certain subjects escape in this fashion. He, immediately after reciting these verses, assumed the sprightliness of his most pleasing manner; and, taking his young friend home with him, entertained him very agreeably till the hour of the ball arrived.”

Alas! when we think that Burns now sleeps “where bitter indignation can no longer lacerate his heart,”* and that most of those fair dames and frizzled gentlemen already lie at his side, where the breastwork of gentility is quite thrown down, who would not sigh over the thin delusions and foolish toys that divide heart from heart, and make man unmerciful to his brother!

It was not now to be hoped that the genius

* “Ubi sæva indignatio cor ulterius lacerare nequit.”—
SWIFT'S *Epitaph*.

of Burns would ever reach maturity, or accomplish aught worthy of itself. His spirit was jarred in its melody; not the soft breath of natural feeling, but the rude hand of Fate, was now sweeping over the strings. And yet what harmony was in him, what music even in his discords! How the wild tones had a charm for the simplest and the wisest; and all men felt and knew that here also was one of the gifted! "If he entered an inn at midnight, after all the inmates were in bed, the news of his arrival circulated from the cellar to the garret; and ere ten minutes had elapsed, the landlord and all his guests were assembled!" Some brief pure moments of poetic life were yet appointed him, in the composition of his songs. We can understand how he grasped at this employment; and how, too, he spurned all other reward for it but what the labor itself brought him. For the soul of Burns, though seathed and marred, was yet living in its full moral strength, though sharply conscious of its errors and abasement; and here, in his destitution and degradation, was one act of seeming nobleness and self-devotedness left even for him to perform. He felt too that, with all the "thoughtless follies" that had "laid him low," the world was unjust and cruel to him; and he silently appealed to another and calmer time. Not as a hired soldier, but as a patriot, would he strive for the glory of his country:

so he cast from him the poor sixpence a day and served zealously as a volunteer. Let us not grudge him this last luxury of his existence; let him not have appealed to us in vain. The money was not necessary to him; he struggled through without it: long since, these guineas would have been gone, and now the high-mindedness of refusing them will plead for him in all hearts forever.

We are here arrived at the crisis of Burns's life; for matters had now taken such a shape with him as could not long continue. If improvement was not to be looked for, Nature could only for a limited time maintain this dark and maddening warfare against the world and itself. We are not medically informed whether any continuance of years was, at this period, probable for Burns; whether his death is to be looked on as in some sense an accidental event, or only as the natural consequence of the long series of events that had preceded. The latter seems to be the likelier opinion; and yet it is by no means a certain one. At all events, as we have said, *some* change could not be very distant. Three gates of deliverance, it seems to us, were open for Burns, — clear poetical activity, madness, or death. The first, with longer life, was still possible, though not probable, for physical causes were beginning to be concerned in it; and yet Burns had an iron resolution, could he have but seen and felt

that not only his highest glory, but his first duty, and the true medicine for all his woes, lay here. The second was still less probable; for his mind was ever among the clearest and firmest. So the milder third gate was opened for him; and he passed, not softly yet speedily, into that still country where the hail-storms and fire-showers do not reach, and the heaviest-laden wayfarer at length lays down his load!

Contemplating this sad end of Burns, and how he sank unaided by any real help, uncheered by any wise sympathy, generous minds have sometimes figured to themselves, with a reproachful sorrow, that much might have been done for him; that, by counsel, true affection, and friendly ministrations, he might have been saved to himself and the world. We question whether there is not more tenderness of heart than soundness of judgment in these suggestions. It seems dubious to us whether the richest, wisest, most benevolent individual could have lent Burns any effectual help. Counsel, which seldom profits any one, he did not need; in his understanding, he knew the right from the wrong, as well perhaps as any man ever did; but the persuasion, which would have availed him, lies not so much in the head as in the heart, where no argument or expostulation could have assisted much to implant it. As to money again, we do not be-

lieve that this was his essential want, or well see how any private man could, even presupposing Burns's consent, have bestowed on him an independent fortune, with much prospect of decisive advantage. It is a mortifying truth that two men, in any rank of society, could hardly be found virtuous enough to give money, and to take it as a necessary gift, without injury to the moral entireness of one or both. But so stands the fact: friendship, in the old heroic sense of that term, no longer exists: except in the cases of kindred or other legal affinity, it is in reality no longer expected, or recognized as a virtue among men. A close observer of manners has pronounced "patronage," that is, pecuniary or other economic furtherance, to be "twice cursed"; cursing him that gives, and him that takes! And thus, in regard to outward matters also, it has become the rule, as in regard to inward it always was and must be the rule, that no one shall look for effectual help to another; but that each shall rest contented with what help he can afford himself. Such, we say, is the principle of modern honor; naturally enough growing out of that sentiment of pride which we inculcate and encourage as the basis of our whole social morality. Many a poet has been poorer than Burns; but no one was ever prouder: we may question whether, without great precautions, even a pension from royalty

would not have galled and encumbered, more than actually assisted, him.

Still less, therefore, are we disposed to join with another class of Burns's admirers, who accuse the higher ranks among us of having ruined Burns by their selfish neglect of him. We have already stated our doubts whether direct pecuniary help, had it been offered, would have been accepted, or could have proved very effectual. We shall readily admit, however, that much was to be done for Burns; that many a poisoned arrow might have been warded from his bosom; many an entanglement in his path cut asunder by the hand of the powerful; and light and heat, shed on him from high places, would have made his humble atmosphere more genial; and the softest heart then breathing might have lived and died with some fewer pangs. Nay, we shall grant farther, and for Burns it is granting much, that, with all his pride, he would have thanked, even with exaggerated gratitude, any one who had cordially befriended him: patronage, unless once cursed, needed not to have been twice so. At all events, the poor promotion he desired in his calling might have been granted: it was his own scheme, therefore likelier than any other to be of service. All this it might have been a luxury — nay, it was a duty — for our nobility to have done. No part of all this, however, did any of them do, or apparently

attempt or wish to do; so much is granted against them. But what then is the amount of their blame? Simply that they were men of the world, and walked by the principles of such men, — that they treated Burns as other nobles and other commoners had done other poets, as the English did Shakespeare, as King Charles and his Cavaliers did Butler, as King Philip and his Grandees did Cervantes. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or shall we cut down our thorns for yielding only a *fence* and haws? How, indeed, could the “nobility and gentry of his native land” hold out any help to this “Scottish bard, proud of his name and country”? Were the nobility and gentry so much as able rightly to help themselves? Had they not their game to preserve, their borough interests to strengthen; dinners, therefore, of various kinds to eat and give? Were their means more than adequate to all this business, or less than adequate? Less than adequate, in general: few of them in reality were richer than Burns; many of them were poorer, for sometimes they had to wring their supplies, as with thumb-screws, from the hard hand, and, in their need of guineas, to forget their duty of mercy, which Burns was never reduced to do. Let us pity and forgive them. The game they preserved and shot, the dinners they ate and gave, the borough interests they strengthened, the *little* Babylons they severally

builded by the glory of their might, are all melted or melting back into the primeval chaos, as man's merely selfish endeavors are fated to do: and here was an action, extending, in virtue of its worldly influence, we may say, through all time; in virtue of its moral nature, beyond all time, being immortal as the spirit of goodness itself; this action was offered them to do, and light was not given them to do it. Let us pity and forgive them. But, better than pity, let us go and *do otherwise*. Human suffering did not end with the life of Burns; neither was the solemn mandate, "Love one another, bear one another's burdens," given to the rich only, but to all men. True, we shall find no Burns to relieve, to assuage by our aid or our pity: but celestial natures, groaning under the fardels of a weary life, we shall still find; and that wretchedness which Fate has rendered *voiceless* and *tuneless* is not the least wretched, but the most.

Still, we do not think that the blame of Burns's failure lies chiefly with the world. The world, it seems to us, treated him with more rather than with less kindness than it usually shows to such men. It has ever, we fear, shown but small favor to its teachers: hunger and nakedness, perils and revilings, the prison, the cross, the poison-chalice, have, in most times and countries, been the market-price it has offered for wisdom, the welcome

with which it has greeted those who have come to enlighten and purify it. Homer and Socrates, and the Christian Apostles, belong to old days ; but the world's martyrology was not completed with these. Roger Bacon and Galileo languish in priestly dungeons ; Tasso pines in the cell of a madhouse ; Camoens dies begging on the streets of Lisbon. So neglected, so "persecuted they the prophets," not in Judæa only, but in all places where men have been. We reckon that every poet of Burns's order is, or should be, a prophet and teacher to his age ; that he has no right to expect great kindness from it, but rather is bound to do it great kindness ; that Burns, in particular, experienced fully the usual proportion of the world's goodness ; and that the blame of his failure, as we have said, lies not chiefly with the world.

Where, then, does it lie ? We are forced to answer, With himself ; it is his inward, not his outward, misfortunes that bring him to the dust. Seldom, indeed, is it otherwise ; seldom is a life morally wrecked but the grand cause lies in some internal mal-arrangement, some want less of good fortune than of good guidance. Nature fashions no creature without implanting in it the strength needful for its action and duration ; least of all, does she so neglect her masterpiece and darling, the poetic soul. Neither can we believe that it is in the

power of *any* external circumstances utterly to ruin the mind of a man; nay, if proper wisdom be given him, even so much as to affect its essential health and beauty. The sternest sum-total of all worldly misfortunes is death; nothing more *can* lie in the cup of human woe: yet many men, in all ages, have triumphed over death, and led it captive; converting its physical victory into a moral victory for themselves, into a seal and immortal consecration for all that their past life had achieved. What has been done may be done again; nay, it is but the degree and not the kind of such heroism that differs in different seasons; for without some portion of this spirit, not of boisterous daring, but of silent fearlessness, of self-denial in all its forms, no good man, in any scene or time, has ever attained to be good.

We have already stated the error of Burns, and mourned over it, rather than blamed it. It was the want of unity in his purposes, of consistency in his aims; the hapless attempt to mingle in friendly union the common spirit of the world with the spirit of poetry, which is of a far different and altogether irreconcilable nature. Burns was nothing wholly, and Burns could be nothing — no man formed as he was can be anything — by halves. The heart, not of a mere hot-blooded, popular versemonger, or poetical *restaurateur*, but of a true poet and

singer, worthy of the old religious heroic times, had been given him ; and he fell in an age, not of heroism and religion, but of scepticism, selfishness, and triviality, when true nobleness was little understood, and its place supplied by a hollow, dissocial, altogether barren and unfruitful principle of pride. The influences of that age, his open, kind, susceptible nature, to say nothing of his highly untoward situation, made it more than usually difficult for him to cast aside, or rightly subordinate ; the better spirit that was within him ever sternly demanded its rights, its supremacy ; he spent his life in endeavoring to reconcile these two, and lost it, as he must lose it, without reconciling them.

Burns was born poor, and born also to continue poor, for he would not endeavor to be otherwise ; this it had been well could he have once for all admitted, and considered as finally settled. He was poor, truly, but hundreds even of his own class and order of minds have been poorer, yet have suffered nothing deadly from it : nay, his own father had a far sorer battle with ungrateful destiny than his was ; and he did not yield to it, but died courageously warring, and to all moral intents prevailing, against it. True, Burns had little means, had even little time for poetry, his only real pursuit and vocation ; but so much the more precious was what little he had. In all

these external respects his case was hard, but very far from the hardest. Poverty, incessant drudgery, and much worse evils, it has often been the lot of poets and wise men to strive with, and their glory to conquer. Locke was banished as a traitor, and wrote his *Essay on the Human Understanding* sheltering himself in a Dutch garret. Was Milton rich or at his ease when he composed *Paradise Lost*? Not only low, but fallen from a height; not only poor, but impoverished; in darkness and with dangers compassed round, he sang his immortal song, and found fit audience, though few. Did not Cervantes finish his work a maimed soldier and in prison? Nay, was not the *Araucana*, which Spain acknowledges as its Epic, written, without even the aid of paper, on scraps of leather, as the stout fighter and voyager snatched any moment from that wild warfare?

And what, then, had these men, which Burns wanted? Two things, both which, it seems to us, are indispensable for such men. They had a true, religious principle of morals, and a single, not a double, aim in their activity. They were not self-seekers and self-worshippers, but seekers and worshippers of something far better than self. Not personal enjoyment was their object, but a high, heroic idea of religion, of patriotism, of heavenly wisdom, in one or the other form, ever hovered

before them; in which cause they neither shrank from suffering, nor called on the earth to witness it as something wonderful, but patiently endured, counting it blessedness enough so to spend and be spent. Thus the "golden calf of self-love," however curiously carved, was not their deity, but the Invisible Goodness, which alone is man's reasonable service. This feeling was as a celestial fountain, whose streams refreshed into gladness and beauty all the provinces of their otherwise too desolate existence. In a word, they willed one thing, to which all other things were subordinated and made subservient, and therefore they accomplished it. The wedge will rend rocks, but its edge must be sharp and single; if it be double, the wedge is bruised in pieces and will rend nothing.

Part of this superiority these men owed to their age, in which heroism and devotedness were still practised, or at least not yet disbelieved in; but much of it likewise they owed to themselves. With Burns, again, it was different. His morality, in most of its practical points, is that of a mere worldly man; enjoyment, in a finer or coarser shape, is the only thing he longs and strives for. A noble instinct sometimes raises him above this, but an instinct only, and acting only for moments. He has no religion; in the shallow age where his days were cast, religion was not discriminated from the New and Old Light *forms* of

religion, and was with these becoming obsolete in the minds of men. His heart, indeed, is alive with a trembling adoration, but there is no temple in his understanding. He lives in darkness and in the shadow of doubt. His religion, at best, is an anxious wish ; like that of Rabelais, "a great perhaps."

He loved poetry warmly, and in his heart ; could he but have loved it purely, and with his whole undivided heart, it had been well. For poetry, as Burns could have followed it, is but another form of wisdom, of religion ; is itself wisdom and religion. But this also was denied him. His poetry is a stray vagrant gleam, which will not be extinguished within him, yet rises not to be the true light of his path, but is often a wildfire that misleads him. It was not necessary for Burns to be rich, to be, or to seem, "independent" ; but it *was* necessary for him to be at one with his own heart ; to place what was highest in his nature highest also in his life, "to seek within himself for that consistency and sequence which external events would forever refuse him." He was born a poet ; poetry was the celestial element of his being, and should have been the soul of his whole endeavors. Lifted into that serene ether whither he had wings given him to mount, he would have needed no other elevation ; poverty, neglect, and all evil, save the desecration of himself and his art, were a small matter

to him ; the pride and the passions of the world lay far beneath his feet ; and he looked down alike on noble and slave, on prince and beggar, and all that wore the stamp of man, with clear recognition, with brotherly affection, with sympathy, with pity. Nay, we question whether, for his culture as a poet, poverty and much suffering for a season were not absolutely advantageous. Great men, in looking back over their lives, have testified to that effect. "I would not for much," says Jean Paul, "that I had been born richer." And yet Paul's birth was poor enough, for in another place he adds : "The prisoner's allowance is bread and water, and I had often only the latter." But the gold that is refined in the hottest furnace comes out the purest ; or, as he has himself expressed it, "the canary-bird sings sweeter the longer it has been trained in a darkened cage."

A man like Burns might have divided his hours between poetry and virtuous industry ; industry which all true feeling sanctions, nay, prescribes, and which has a beauty for that cause beyond the pomp of thrones ; but to divide his hours between poetry and rich men's banquets was an ill-starred and inauspicious attempt. How could he be at ease at such banquets ? What had he to do there, mingling his music with the coarse roar of altogether earthly voices, brightening the thick smoke of intoxication with fire lent him from heaven ?

Was it his aim to *enjoy* life? To-morrow he must go drudge as an exciseman! We wonder not that Burns became moody, indignant, and at times an offender against certain rules of society, but rather that he did not grow utterly frantic, and run *amuck* against them all. How could a man so falsely placed, by his own or others' fault, ever know contentment or peaceable diligence for an hour? What he did under such perverse guidance, and what he forbore to do, alike fill us with astonishment at the natural strength and worth of his character.

Doubtless there was a remedy for this perverseness, but not in others, only in himself; least of all, in simple increase of wealth and worldly "respectability." We hope we have now heard enough about the efficacy of wealth for poetry, and to make poets happy. Nay, have we not seen another instance of it in these very days? Byron, a man of an endowment considerably less ethereal than that of Burns, is born in the rank, not of a Scottish ploughman, but of an English peer, the highest worldly honors, the fairest worldly career, are his by inheritance; the richest harvest of fame he soon reaps, in another province, by his own hand. And what does all this avail him? Is he happy, is he good, is he true? Alas! he has a poet's soul, and strives towards the Infinite and the Eternal, and soon feels that all this is but mounting to the house-top to reach the

stars ! Like Burns, he is only a proud man ; might, like him, have “ purchased a pocket-copy of Milton to study the character of Satan ” ; for Satan also is Byron’s grand exemplar, the hero of his poetry, and the model apparently of his conduct. As in Burns’s case, too, the celestial element will not mingle with the clay of earth ; both poet and man of the world he must not be ; vulgar ambition will not live kindly with poetic adoration ; he *cannot* serve God and Mammon. Byron, like Burns, is not happy ; nay, he is the most wretched of all men. His life is falsely arranged : the fire that is in him is not a strong, still, central fire, warming into beauty the products of a world, but it is the mad fire of a volcano ; and now — we look sadly into the ashes of a crater, which ere long will fill itself with snow !

Byron and Burns were sent forth as missionaries to their generation, to teach it a higher doctrine, a purer truth ; they had a message to deliver, which left them no rest till it was accomplished ; in dim throes of pain, this divine behest lay smouldering within them, for they knew not what it meant, and felt it only in mysterious anticipation, and they had to die without articulately uttering it. They are in the camp of the unconverted, yet not as high messengers of rigorous though benignant Truth, but as soft flattering singers, and in pleasant fellowship will they live there ; they are first

adulated, then persecuted; they accomplish little for others; they find no peace for themselves, but only death and the peace of the grave. We confess it is not without a certain mournful awe that we view the fate of these noble souls, so richly gifted, yet ruined to so little purpose with all their gifts. It seems to us there is a stern moral taught in this piece of history, — *twice* told us in our own time! Surely to men of like genius, if there be any such, it carries with it a lesson of deep, impressive significance. Surely it would become such a man, furnished for the highest of all enterprises, — that of being the poet of his age, — to consider well what it is that he attempts, and in what spirit he attempts it. For the words of Milton are true in all times, and were never truer than in this: "He who would write heroic poems must make his whole life a heroic poem." If he cannot first so make his life, then let him hasten from this arena; for neither its lofty glories nor its fearful perils are fit for him. Let him dwindle into a modish ballad-monger; let him worship and be-sing the idols of the time, and the time will not fail to reward him, — if, indeed, he can endure to live in that capacity! Byron and Burns could not live as idol-priests, but the fire of their own hearts consumed them, and better it was for them that they could not. For it is not in the favor of the great or of the small, but in a life of

truth, and in the inexpugnable citadel of his own soul, that a Byron's or a Burns's strength must lie. Let the great stand aloof from him, or know how to reverence him. Beautiful is the union of wealth with favor and furtherance for literature, like the costliest flower-jar enclosing the loveliest amaranth. Yet let not the relation be mistaken. A true poet is not one whom they can hire by money or flattery to be a minister of their pleasures, their writer of occasional verses, their purveyor of table-wit; he cannot be their menial, he cannot even be their partisan. At the peril of both parties, let no such union be attempted! Will a courser of the sun work softly in the harness of a dray-horse? His hoofs are of fire, and his path is through the heavens, bringing light to all lands; will he lumber on mud highways, dragging ale for earthly appetites from door to door?

But we must stop short in these considerations, which would lead us to boundless lengths. We had something to say on the public moral character of Burns; but this also we must forbear. We are far from regarding him as guilty before the world, as guiltier than the average; nay, from doubting that he is less guilty than one of ten thousand. Tried at a tribunal far more rigid than that where the *Plebiscita* of common civic reputations are pronounced, he has seemed to us even there less worthy of blame than of pity and wonder. But

world is habitually unjust in its judgments of such men; unjust on many grounds, of which this one may be stated as the substance: It decides, like a court of law, by dead statutes; and not positively but negatively, less on what is done right than on what is or is not done wrong. Not the few inches of deflection from the mathematical orbit, which are so easily measured, but the *ratio* of these to the whole diameter, constitutes the real aberration. This orbit may be a planet's, its diameter the breadth of the solar system; or it may be a city hippodrome, nay, the circle of a gin-horse, its diameter a score of feet or paces. But the inches of deflection only are measured, and it is assumed that the diameter of the gin-horse and that of the planet will yield the same ratio when compared with them! Here lies the root of many a blind, cruel condemnation of Burns, Swifts, Rousseaus, which one never listens to with approval. Granted the ship comes into harbor with shrouds and tackle damaged; the pilot is blameworthy; he has not been all-wise and all-powerful; but, to know *how* blameworthy, tell us first whether his voyage has been round the globe, or only to Ramsgate and the Isle of Dogs.

With our readers in general, with men of right feeling anywhere, we are not required to plead for Burns. In pitying admiration he lies enshrined in all our hearts, in a far nobler

mausoleum than that one of marble ; neither will his works, even as they are, pass away from the memory of men. While the Shakespeares and Miltons roll on like mighty rivers through the country of Thought, bearing fleets of traffickers and assiduous pearl fishers on their waves, this little Valelusa fountain will also arrest our eye ; for this also is of Nature's own and most cunning workmanship, bursts from the depths of the earth with a full gushing current, into the light of day ; and often will the traveller turn aside to drink of its clear waters, and muse among its rocks and pines !





SUMMARY.

BURNS one of the most considerable British men of the eighteenth century: An age the most prosaic Britain had yet seen. His hard and most disadvantageous conditions. Not merely as a poet, but as a man, that he chiefly interests and affects us. His life a deeper tragedy than any brawling Napoleon's. His heart, erring and at length broken, full of inborn riches, of love to all living and lifeless things. The peasant poet bears himself among the low, with whom his lot is cast, like a king in exile. (3-9.) His writings but a poor mutilated fraction of what was in him, yet of a quality enduring as the English tongue. He wrote, not from hearsay, but from sight and actual experience. This, easy as it looks, the fundamental difficulty which all poets have to strive with. Byron, heartily as he detested insincerity, far enough from faultless. No poet of Burns's susceptibility from first to last so totally free from affectation. Some of his letters, however, by no means deserve this praise. His singular power of making all subjects,

even the most homely, interesting. Wherever there is a sky above him, and a world around him, the poet is in his place. Every genius an impossibility till he appears. (10-20.) Burns's rugged earnest truth, yet tenderness and sweet native grace. His clear graphic "descriptive touches" and piercing emphasis of thought. Professor Stewart's testimony to Burns's intellectual vigor. A deeper insight than any "doctrine of association." In the poetry of Burns, keenness of insight keeps pace with keenness of feeling. Loving indignation and good hatred: *Scots wha hae: Macpherson's Farewell*: Sunny buoyant floods of humor. (21-34.) Imperfections of Burns's poetry: *Tam o' Shanter*, not a true poem so much as a piece of sparkling rhetoric: *The Jolly Beggars* the most complete and perfect as a poetical composition. His songs the most truly inspired and most deeply felt of all his poems. His influence on the hearts and literature of his country: Literary patriotism. (35-45.) Burns's acted works even more interesting than his written ones: and these too, alas, but a fragment: His passionate youth never passed into clear and steadfast manhood. The only true happiness of a man: Often it is the greatest minds that are latest in obtaining it: Burns and Byron. Burns's hard-worked, yet happy boyhood: His estimable parents. Early dissipation. In necessity and obedience a man should find his highest freedom. (46-53.) Religious quarrels and scepticisms. Faithlessness: Exile and blackest desperation. Invited to Edinburgh: A Napoleon among the crowned sovereigns of literature. Sir Walter Scott's reminiscence of an inter-

view with Burns. Burns's calm manly bearing amongst the Edinburgh aristocracy. His bitter feeling of his own indigence. By the great he is treated in the customary fashion; and each party goes his several way. (54 - 63.) What Burns was next to do, or to avoid: His Excise-and-Farm scheme not an unreasonable one: No failure of external means, but of internal, that overtook Burns. Good beginnings. Patrons of genius and picturesque tourists: Their moral rottenness, by which he became infected, gradually eat out the heart of his life. Meteors of French politics rise before him, but they are not *his* stars. Calumny is busy with him. The little great-folk of Dumfries: Burns's desolation. In his destitution and degradation one act of self-devotedness still open to him: Not as a hired soldier, but as a patriot, would he strive for the glory of his country. The crisis of his life: Death. (64 - 72.) Little effectual help could perhaps have been rendered to Burns: Patronage twice cursed: Many a poet has been poorer, none prouder. And yet much might have been done to have made his humble atmosphere more genial. Little Babylons and Babylonians; Let us go and *do otherwise*. The market-price of wisdom. Not in the power of *any* mere external circumstances to ruin the mind of a man. The errors of Burns to be mourned over, rather than blamed. The great want of his life was the great want of his age, a true faith in religion and a singleness and unselfishness of aim. (73 - 81.) Poetry, as Burns could and ought to have followed it, is but another form of wisdom, of religion. For his culture as a poet, poverty and much suffering for a season were ab-

solutely advantageous. To divide his hours between poetry and rich men's banquets an ill-starred attempt. Byron, rich in worldly means and honors, no whit happier than Burns in his poverty and worldly degradation: They had a message from on high to deliver, which could leave them no rest while it remained unaccomplished. Death and the rest of the grave: A stern moral, *twice* told us in our own time. The world habitually unjust in its judgments of such men. With men of right feeling anywhere, there will be no need to plead for Burns: In pitying admiration he lies enshrined in all our hearts. (83 - 90.)





Coming through the Rye. — See page 105.



FAVORITE POEMS,

By ROBERT BURNS.





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THE COTTER'S SATURDAY NIGHT.

INSCRIBED TO ROBERT AIKEN, ESQ., OF AYR.

“Let not ambition mock their useful toil,
Their homely joys, and destiny obscure;
Nor Grandeur hear, with a disdainful smile,
The short but simple annals of the Poor.”

GRAY.



Y lov'd, my honour'd, much respected
friend !

No mercenary bard his homage pays ;
With honest pride, I scorn each selfish end :
My dearest meed, a friend's esteem and
praise :

To you I sing, in simple Scottish lays,
The lowly train in life's sequester'd scene ;
The native feelings strong, the guileless ways ;
What Aiken in a cottage would have been ;
Ah ! though his worth unknown, far happier
there I ween.

November chill blows loud wi' angry sigh ;
The short'ning winter-day is near a close ;
The miry beasts retreating frae the pleugh ;
The black'ning trains o' craws to their repose ;
The toil-worn Cotter frae his labour goes,
This night his weekly moil is at an end,
Collects his spades, his mattocks, and his hoes,
Hoping the morn in ease and rest to spend,
And weary, o'er the moor, his course does
hameward bend.

At length his lonely cot appears in view,
Beneath the shelter of an aged tree ;
Th' expectant wee-things, toddlin, stacher thro',
To meet their Dad, wi' flichterin noise an'
glee.
His wee bit ingle, blinkin bonnily,
His clane hearth-stane, his thriftie wifie's
smile,
The lispin infant prattling on his knee,
Does a' his weary carking cares beguile,
An' makes him quite forget his labour an' his
toil.

Belyve, the elder bairns come drapping in,
 At service out, among the farmers roun' ;
 Some ca' the pleugh, some herd, some tentie
 rin

A cannie errand to a neebor town :
 Their eldest hope, their Jenny, woman grown,
 In youthfu' bloom, love sparkling in her e'e,
 Comes hame, perhaps, to show a braw new
 gown,

Or deposite her sair-won penny-fee,
 To help her parents dear, if they in hardship be.

Wi' joy unfeign'd brothers and sisters meet,
 An' each for other's welfare kindly spiers :
 The social hours, swift-wing'd, unnoticed fleet ;
 Each tells the uncoss that he sees or hears ;
 The parents, partial, eye their hopeful years,
 Anticipation forward points the view.
 The mother, wi' her needle an' her shears,
 Gars auld claes look amaist as weel's the
 new ;
 The father mixes a' wi' admonition due.

Their master's an' their mistress's command,
 The youngers a' are warned to obey ;

An' mind their labours wi' an eydent hand,
An' ne'er, tho' out o' sight, to jauk or play :
" An', oh ! be sure to fear the Lord alway,
An' mind your duty, duly, morn an' night !
Lest in temptation's path ye gang astray,
Implore His counsel and assisting might :
They never sought in vain that sought the
Lord aright ! "

But, hark ! a rap comes gently to the door ;
Jenny, wha kens the meaning o' the same,
Tells how a neebor lad cam o'er the moor,
To do some errands, and convoy her hame.
The wily mother sees the conscious flame
Sparkle in Jenny's e'e, and flush her cheek ;
Wi' heart-struck anxious care, inquires his
name,
While Jenny hafflins is afraid to speak ;
Weel pleas'd the mother hears, it's nae wild
worthless rake.

Wi' kindly welcome Jenny brings him ben ;
A strappan youth ; he takes the mother's
eye ;
Blythe Jenny sees the visit 's no ill ta'en ;

The father cracks of horses, pleughs, and
kye.

The youngster's artless heart o'erflows wi' joy,
But, blate and faithfu', scarce can weel be-
have ;

The woman, wi' a woman's wiles, can spy
What makes the youth sac bashfu' an' sae
grave ;

Weel pleas'd to think her bairn's respected
like the lave.

O happy love ! where love like this is found !

O heart-felt raptures ! bliss beyond compare !

I've paced much this weary, mortal round,

And sage experience bids me this declare —

“If Heav'n a draught of heav'nly pleasure
spare,

One cordial in this melancholy vale,

'Tis when a youthful, loving, modest pair,

In other's arms breathe out the tender tale,

Beneath the milk-white thorn that scents the
ev'ning gale !”

Is there, in human form, that bears a heart —

A wretch ! a villain ! lost to love and truth !

That can, with studied, sly, ensnaring art,
Betray sweet Jenny's unsuspecting youth ?
Curse on his perjur'd arts ! dissembling smooth !
Are honor, virtue, conscience, all exil'd ?
Is there no pity, no relenting ruth,
Points to the parents fondling o'er their
child ?
Then paints the ruin'd maid, and their dis-
traction wild !

But now the supper crowns their simple board,
The halesome parritch, chief o' Scotia's food :
The soupe, their only hawkie does afford,
That 'yont the hallan snugly chows her cood ;
The dame brings forth in complimental mood,
To grace the lad, her weel-hain'd kebbuck, fell,
An' aft he 's prest, an' aft he ca's it guid ;
The frugal wisie, garrulous, will tell
How 't was a towmond auld, sin' lint was i'
the bell.

The cheerfu' supper done, wi' serious face,
They, round the ingle, form a circle wide ;
The sire turns o'er, wi' patriarchal grace,
The big ha'-Bible, ance his father's pride :
His bonnet rev'rently is laid aside,

His lyart haffets wearing thin an' bare;
 Those strains that once did sweet in Zion glide,
 He wales a portion with judicious care;
 And "Let us worship God!" he says, with
 solemn air.

They chant their artless notes in simple guise;
 They tune their hearts, by far the noblest
 aim:

Perhaps "Dundee's" wild warbling measures
 rise,

Or plaintive "Martyrs," worthy of the name;
 Or noble "Elgin" beets the heav'nward flame,
 The sweetest far of Scotia's holy lays:

Compar'd with these, Italian trills are tame;
 The tickl'd ears no heart-felt raptures raise;
 Nae unison hae they with our Creator's praise.

The priest-like father reads the sacred page,
 How Abram was the friend of God on high;
 Or Moses bade eternal warfare wage

With Amalek's ungracious progeny;
 Or how the royal Bard did groaning lie
 Beneath the stroke of Heaven's avenging
 ire;

Or Job's pathetic plaint, and wailing cry;
Or rapt Isaiah's wild, seraphic fire;
Or other holy seers that tune the sacred lyre.

Perhaps the Christian volume is the theme,
How guiltless blood for guilty man was
shed;
How He, who bore in Heav'n the second name,
Had not on earth whereon to lay His head:
How His first followers and servants sped;
The precepts sage they wrote to many a
land:
How he, who lone in Patmos banished,
Saw in the sun a mighty angel stand;
And heard great Bab'lon's doom pronounced
by Heav'n's command.

Then kneeling down, to Heav'n's Eternal
King,
The saint, the father, and the husband prays:
Hope "springs exulting on triumphant wing,"
That thus they all shall meet in future days:
There ever bask in uncreated rays,
No more to sigh, or shed the bitter tear,
Together hymning their Creator's praise,

In such society, yet still more dear ;
While circling time moves round in an eternal
sphere.

Compar'd with this, how poor Religion's pride,
In all the pomp of method, and of art,
When men display to congregations wide
Devotion's ev'ry grace, except the heart !
The Pow'r, incens'd, the pageant will desert,
The pompous strain, the sacerdotal stole ;
But haply, in some cottage far apart,
May hear, well pleas'd, the language of the
soul ;
And in His book of life the inmates poor
enrol.

Then homeward all take off their sev'ral way ;
The youngling cottagers retire to rest :
The parent-pair their secret homage pay,
And proffer up to Heav'n the warm request,
That He, who stills the raven's clam'rous nest,
And decks the lily fair in flow'ry pride,
Would, in the way His wisdom sees the best,
For them, and for their little ones provide ;
But chiefly, in their hearts with grace divine
preside.

From scenes like these old Scotia's grandeur
springs,

That makes her lov'd at home, rever'd
abroad :

Princes and lords are but the breath of kings ;

“ An honest man's the noblest work of
God ” :

And certes, in fair virtue's heav'nly road,

The cottage leaves the palace far behind ;

What is a lordling's pomp ? a cumbrous load,

Disguising oft the wretch of human kind,

Studied in arts of hell, in wickedness refin'd !

O Scotia ! my dear, my native soil !

For whom my warmest wish to Heaven is
sent !

Long may thy hardy sons of rustic toil

Be blest with health, and peace, and sweet
content !

And, oh, may Heaven their simple lives prevent

From luxury's contagion, weak and vile !

Then, howe'er crowns and coronets be rent,

A virtuous populace may rise the while,

And stand a wall of fire around their much-
lov'd Isle.

O Thou ! who pour'd the patriotic tide
 That stream'd thro' Wallace's undaunted
 heart ;
 Who dar'd to nobly stem tyrannic pride,
 Or nobly die, the second glorious part,
 (The patriot's God, peculiarly 'Thou art,
 His friend, inspirer, guardian, and reward !)
 O never, never Scotia's realm desert ;
 But still the patriot, and the patriot-bard,
 In bright succession raise, her ornament and
 guard !

TAM O' SHANTER.

A TALE.

" Brownjis and of Bogilis full is this Buke."

GAWIN DOUGLAS.



WHEN chapman billies leave the street,
 And drouthy neebors, neebors meet,
 As market-days are wearing late,
 An' folk begin to tak the gate ;
 While we sit bousing at the nappy,
 An' getting fou and unco happy,
 We thinkna on the lang Scots miles,

The mosses, waters, slaps, and stiles,
That lie between us and our hame,
Whare sits our sulky sullen dame,
Gath'ring her brows like gath'ring storm,
Nursing her wrath to keep it warm.

This truth fand honest Tam o' Shanter,
As he frae Ayr ae night did canter
(Auld Ayr, wham ne'er a town surpasses,
For honest men and bonnie lasses).

O Tam ! hadst thou but been sae wise,
As ta'en thy ain wife Kate's advice !
She tauld thee weel thou wast a skellum,
A blethering, blustering, drunken blellum ;
That frae November till October,
Ae market-day thou was nae sober ;
That ilka melder, wi' the miller,
Thou sat as lang as thou had siller ;
That ev'ry naig was ca'd a shoe on,
The smith and thee gat roaring fou on ;
That at the Lord's house, ev'n on Sunday,
Thou drank wi' Kirkton Jean till Monday.
She prophesy'd that, late or soon,
Thou would be found deep drown'd in Doon ;

Or catch'd wi' warlocks i' the mirk,
By Alloway's auld haunted kirk.

Ah, gentle dames ! it gars me greet,
To think how mony counsels sweet,
How mony lengthen'd, sage advices,
The husband frae the wife despises !

But to our tale : Ae market night,
Tam had got planted unco right ;
Fast by an ingle, bleezing finely,
Wi' reaming swats, that drank divinely ;
And at his elbow, Souter Johnny,
His ancient, trusty, drouthy crony ;
Tam lo'ed him like a vera brither ;
They had been fou for weeks thegither.
The night drave on wi' sangs and clatter ;
And ay the ale was growing better :
The landlady and Tam grew gracious,
Wi' favours, secret, sweet, and precious :
The souter tauld his queerest stories ;
The landlord's laugh was ready chorus :
The storm without might rair and rustle,
Tam did na mind the storm a whistle.

Care, mad to see a man sae happy,
E'en drowned himself amang the nappy !
As bees flee hame wi' lades o' treasure,
The minutes wing'd their way wi' pleasure :
Kings may be blest, but Tam was glorious,
O'er a' the ills o' life victorious !

But pleasures are like poppies spread,
You seize the flow'r, its bloom is shed ;
Or like the snow falls in the river,
A moment white — then melts for ever ;
Or like the borealis race,
That flit ere you can point their place ;
Or like the rainbow's lovely form
Evanishing amid the storm.
Nae man can tether time or tide ; —
The hour approaches Tam maun ride ;
That hour, o' night's black arch the key-stane,
That dreary hour he mounts his beast in ;
And sic a night he taks the road in,
As ne'er poor sinner was abroad in.

The wind blew as 't wad blawn its last ;
The rattling show'rs rose on the blast ;

The speedy gleams the darkness swallow'd ;
Loud, deep, and lang, the thunder bellow'd :
That night, a child might understand,
The Deil had business on his hand.

Weel mounted on his gray mare, Meg,
A better never lifted leg,
Tam skelpit on thro' dub and mire,
Despising wind, and rain, and fire ;
Whiles holding fast his gude blue bonnet ;
Whiles crooning o'er some auld Scots sonnet ;
Whiles glow'ring round wi' prudent cares,
Lest bogles catch him unawares ;
Kirk Alloway was drawing nigh,
Whare ghaists and houlets nightly cry.

By this time he was cross the ford,
Whare in the snaw the chapman smoor'd ;
And past the birks and meikle stane,
Whare drunken Charlie brak 's neck-bane ;
And thro' the whins, and by the cairn,
Whare hunters fand the murder'd bairn ;
And near the thorn, aboon the well,
Whare Mungo's mither hang'd hersel.
Before him Doon pours all his floods ;

The doubling storm roars thro' the woods ;
The lightnings flash from pole to pole ;
Near and more near the thunders roll :
When, glimmering thro' the groaning trees,
Kirk Alloway seem'd in a bleeze ;
Thro' ilka bore the beams were glancing ;
And loud resounded mirth and dancing.

Inspiring bold John Barleycorn !
What dangers thou canst make us scorn !
Wi' tippenny, we fear nae evil ;
Wi' usquebae, we 'll face the Devil !
The swats sae ream'd in Tammie's noddle,
Fair play, he car'd na deils a boddle.
But Maggie stood right sair astonish'd,
Till, by the heel and hand admonish'd,
She ventur'd forward on the light ;
And, wow ! Tam saw an unco sight !
Warlocks and witches in a dance ;
Nae cotillion brent new frae France,
But hornpipes, jigs, strathspeys, and reels,
Put life and mettle in their heels.
At winnock-bunker in the east,
There sat auld Nick, in shape o' beast ;
A towzie tyke, black, grim, and large,

“And, wow! Tam saw an unco sight!”



To gie them music was his charge :
He screw'd the pipes and gart them skirl,
Till roof and rafters a' did dirl, —
Coffins stood round, like open presses,
That shaw'd the dead in their last dresses ;
And by some devilish cantrip slight
Each in its cauld hand held a light, —
By which heroic Tam was able
To note upon the haly table,
A murderer's banes in gibbet airns ;
Twa span-lang, wee, unchristen'd bairns ;
A thief, new-cuttet frae a rape,
Wi' his last gasp his gab did gape ;
Five tomahawks, wi' blude red rusted ;
Five scymitars, wi' murder crusted ;
A garter, which a babe had strangled ;
A knife, a father's throat had mangled,
Whom his ain son o' life bereft,
The gray hairs yet stack to the heft ;
Wi' mair o' horrible and awfu',
Which ev'n to name wad be unlawfu'.

As Tammie glowr'd, amaz'd and curious,
The mirth and fun grew fast and furious :
The piper loud and louder blew ;

The dancers quick and quicker flew ;
They reel'd, they set, they cross'd, they cleekit,
Till ilka carlin swat and reekit,
And coost her duddies to the wark,
And linket at it in her sark !

Now Tam, O Tam ! had thae been queans
A' plump and strapping in their teens ;
Their sarks, instead o' creeshie flannen,
Been snaw-white seventeen-hunder linnen ;
Thir breeks o' mine, my only pair,
That ance were plush, o' gude blue hair,
I wad hae gi'en them off my hurdies,
For ae blink o' the bonnie burdies !

But wither'd beldams, auld and droll,
Rigwoodie hags, wad spean a foal,
Lowping and flinging on a crummock,
I wonder didna turn thy stomach.

But Tam kend what was what fu' brawlie,
"There was ae winsome wench and walie,"
That night enlisted in the core,
(Lang after kend on Carriek shore ;
For mony a beast to dead she shot,

And perish'd mony a bonnie boat,
And shook baith meikle corn and bear,
And kept the country-side in fear,)
Her cutty sark, o' Paisley harn,
That, while a lassie, she had worn,
In longitude tho' sorely scanty,
It was her best, and she was vauntie. —
Ah ! little kend thy reverend grannie,
That sark she coft for her wee Nannie,
Wi' twa pund Scots, ('t was a' her riches,)
Wad ever grac'd a dance of witches !

But here my muse her wing maun cour ;
Sic flights are far beyond her pow'r ;
To sing how Nannie lap and flang
(A souple jade she was, and strang),
And how Tam stood, like ane bewitch'd,
And thought his very e'en enrich'd ;
Even Satan glowr'd, and fidg'd fu' fain,
And hotch'd and blew wi' might and main :
Till first ae caper, syne anither,
Tam tint his reason a' thegither,
And roars out, " Weel done, Cutty-sark ! "
And in an instant all was dark ;
And scarcely had he Maggie rallied,
When out the hellish legion sallied.

As bees bizz out wi' angry fyke,
When plundering herds assail their byke;
As open pussie's mortal foes,
When, pop ! she starts before their nose ;
As eager runs the market-crowd,
When, " Catch the thief ! " resounds aloud ;
So Maggie runs, the witches follow,
Wi' monie an eldritch skreech and hollow.

Ah, Tam ! ah, Tam ! thou 'll get thy fairin !
In hell they 'll roast thee like a herrin !
In vain thy Kate awaits thy comin !
Kate soon will be a woefu' woman !
Now, do thy speedy utmost, Meg,
And win the key-stane of the brig ;
There at them thou thy tail may toss,
A running stream they dare na cross.
But ere the key-stane she could make,
The fient a tail she had to shake !
For Nannie, far before the rest,
Hard upon noble Maggie prest,
And flew at Tam wi' furious ettle ;
But little wist she Maggie's mettle —
Ae spring brought off her master hale,
But left behind her ain gray tail :

The carlin claught her by the rump,
And left poor Maggie scarce a stump.

Now, wha this tale o' truth shall read,
Ilk man and mother's son, tak heed;
Whene'er to drink you are inclin'd,
Or cutty-sarks run in your mind,
Think, ye may buy the joys o'er dear,
Remember Tam o' Shanter's mare.

ADDRESS TO THE DEIL.

"O Prince! O Chief of many throned pow'rs,
That led th' embattled Seraphim to war."

MILTON.



THOU! whatever title suit thee,
Auld Hornie, Satan, Nick, or Clootie,
Wha in yon cavern grim an' sootie,
Closed under hatches,
Spairges about the brunstane cootie,
To scaud poor wretches.

Hear me, auld Hangie, for a wee,
An' let poor damned bodies be;

I'm sure sma' pleasure it can gie,
 Ev'n to a deil,
To skelp an' scaud poor dogs like me,
 An' hear us squeel!

Great is thy pow'r, an' great thy fame;
Far kend an' noted is thy name;
An' tho' yon lowin heugh 's thy hame,
 Thou travels far;
An', faith! thou 's neither lag nor lame,
 Nor blate nor scaur.

Whyles, ranging like a roarin lion,
For prey a' holes an' corners tryin;
Whyles on the strong-wing'd tempest flyin,
 Tirlin the kirks;
Whyles in the human bosom pryin,
 Unseen thou lurks.

I've heard my reverend Graunie say,
In lanely glens ye like to stray;
Or where auld ruin'd castles, gray,
 Nod to the moon,
Ye fright the nightly wand'rer's way,
 Wi' eldritch croon.

When twilight did my Graunie summon,
To say her pray'rs, douce, honest woman !
Aft yont the dyke she 's heard you bummin,
 Wi' eerie drone ;
Or, rustlin, thro' the boortries comin,
 Wi' heavy groan.

Ac dreary, windy, winter night,
The stars shot down wi' sklentín light,
Wi' you, mysel, I gat a fright,
 Ayont the lough ;
Ye, like a rash-bush, stood in sight,
 Wi' waving sugh.

The cudgel in my nieve did shake,
Each bristl'd hair stood like a stake,
When wi' an eldritch stoor, quaick, quaick,
 Amang the springs,
Awa ye squatter'd, like a drake,
 On whistling wings.

Let warlocks grim, an' wither'd hags,
Tell how wi' you on ragweed nags,
They skim the muirs, an' dizzy crags,
 Wi' wicked speed ;

And in kirk-yards renew their leagues,
Owre howkit dead.

* * *

When thowes dissolve the snawy hoord,
An' float the jinglin' icy-boord,
Then water-kelpies haunt the foord,
By your direction,
An' nighted trav'lers are allur'd
To their destruction.

An' aft your moss-traversing spunkies
Decoy the wight that late an' drunk is :
The bleezin, curst, mischievous monkies
Delude his eyes,
Till in some miry slough he sunk is,
Ne'er mair to rise.

When masons' mystic word an' grip,
In storms an' tempests raise you up,
Some cock or cat your rage maun stop,
Or, strange to tell !
The youngest Brother ye wad whip
Aff straught to hell.

Lang syne, in Eden's bonnie yard,
 When youthfu' lovers first were pair'd,
 An' all the soul of love they shar'd,
 The raptur'd hour,
 Sweet on the fragrant, flow'ry swaird,
 In shady bow'r :

Then you, ye auld, snee-drawing dog !
 Ye came to Paradise incog,
 An' play'd on man a cursed brogue,
 (Black be you fa !)
 An' gied the infant warld a shog,
 'Maist ruin'd a'.

* * *

But a' your doings to rehearse,
 Your wily snares an' fechtin fierce,
 Sin' that day Michael did you pierce,
 Down to this time,
 Wad ding a' Lallan tongue, or Erse,
 In prose or rhyme.

* * *

But, fare you weel, auld Nickie-ben !
 O wad ye tak a thought an' men' !
 Ye aiblins might — I dinna ken —
 Still hae a stake —

I'm wae to think upo' yon den,
 Ev'n for your sake !

ADDRESS TO THE UNCO GUID, OR THE RIGIDLY RIGHTEOUS.

My son, these maxims make a rule,
 And lump them aye thegither ;
 The RIGID RIGHTEOUS is a fool,
 The RIGID WISE anither :
 The cleanest corn that e'er was dight
 May hae some pyles o' caff in ;
 So ne'er a fellow-creature slight
 For random fits o' daffin.

SOLOMON, *Eccles.* vii. 16.



YE wha are sae guid yoursel,
 Sae pious and sae holy,
 Ye've nought to do but mark and tell
 Your neebour's fauts and folly !
 Whase life is like a weel-gaun mill,
 Supply'd wi' store o' water,
 The heapet happer's ebbing still,
 And still the clap plays clatter.

Hear me, ye venerable Core,
 As counsel for poor mortals,

That frequent pass douce Wisdom's door,
 For glaikit Folly's portals ;
 I, for their thoughtless, careless sakes,
 Would here propone defences,
 Their donsie tricks, their black mistakes,
 Their failings and mischances.

Ye see your state wi' theirs compar'd
 And shudder at the niffer,
 But cast a moment's fair regard,
 What maks the mighty differ ?
 Discount what scant occasion gave
 That purity ye pride in,
 And (what's aft mair than a' the lave)
 Your better art o' hidin'.

Think, when your castigated pulse
 Gies now and then a wallop,
 What raging must his veins convulse,
 That still eternal gallop :
 Wi' wind and tide fair i' your tail,
 Right on ye scud your sea-way :
 But in the teeth o' baith to sail,
 It maks an unco leeway.

See Social life and Glee sit down,
All joyous and unthinking,
Till, quite transnugrified, they're grown
Debauchery and Drinking :
O would they stay to calculate
Th' eternal consequences ;
Or your more dreaded hell to state,
Damnation of expenses !

Ye high, exalted, virtuous Dames,
Ty'd up in godly laces,
Before ye gie poor Frailty names,
Suppose a change o' cases ;
A dear lov'd lad, convenience snug,
A treacherous inclination —
But let me whisper i' your lug,
Ye're aiblins nae temptation.

Then gently scan your brother Man,
Still gentler sister Woman ;
Tho' they may gang a kennie wrang,
To step aside is human :
One point must still be greatly dark,
The moving *Why* they do it ;

And just as lamely can ye mark
How far perhaps they rue it.

Who made the heart, 't is He alone
Decidedly can try us,
He knows each chord — its various tone,
Each spring — its various bias :
Then at the balance let 's be mute,
We never can adjust it ;
What 's *done* we partly may compute,
But know not what 's *resisted*.

TO A MOUSE,

ON TURNING HER UP IN HER NEST, WITH THE
PLOUGH, NOVEMBER, 1785.



EE, sleekit, cowrin, tim'rous beastie,
O, what a panic 's in thy breastie !
Thou need na start awa sae hasty,
Wi' bickering brattle !
I wad be laith to rin an' chase thee,
Wi' murd'ring pattle !

I 'm truly sorry man's dominion
Has broken Nature's social union,

An' justifies that ill opinion,
Which makes thee startle
At me, thy poor, earth-born companion,
An' fellow-mortal !

I doubt na, whyles, but thou may thieve ;
What then ? poor beastie, thou maun live !
A daimen-icker in a thrave
 'S a sma' request :
I'll get a blessin wi' the lave,
 And never miss 't !

Thy wee bit housie, too, in ruin !
Its silly wa's the win's are strewin !
An' naething, now, to big a new one,
 O' foggage green !
An' bleak December's winds ensuin,
 Baith snell an' keen !

Thou saw the fields laid bare an' waste,
An' weary winter comin fast,
An' cozie here, beneath the blast,
 Thou thought to dwell,
Till, crash ! the cruel coulter past
 Out thro' thy cell.

That wee bit heap o' leaves an' stibble
Has cost thee mony a weary nibble !
Now thou's turn'd out, for a' thy trouble,
 But house or hald,
To thole the winter's sleety dribble,
 An' cranreuch cauld !

But, Mousie, thou art no thy lane,
In proving foresight may be vain :
The best-laid schemes o' mice an' men,
 Gang aft a-gley,
An' lea'e us nought but grief and pain,
 For promis'd joy.

Still thou art blest, compar'd wi' me !
The present only toucheth thee :
But, Och ! I backward cast my e'e
 On prospects drear !
An' forward, tho' I canna see,
 I guess an' fear !



A WINTER NIGHT.

" Poor naked wretches, wheresoe'er you are,
 That bide the pelting of this pitiless storm !
 How shall your houseless heads, and unfed sides,
 Your loop'd and window'd raggedness, defend you
 From seasons such as these ? "

SHAKESPEARE.



WHEN biting Boreas, fell and doure,
 Sharp shivers thro' the leafless bow'r ;
 When Phœbus gies a short-liv'd
 glow'r,
 Far south the lift,
 Dim-dark'ning thro' the flaky show'r,
 Or whirling drift :

Ae night the storm the steeples rocked,
 Poor labour sweet in sleep was locked,
 While burns, wi' snawy wreaths upchoked
 Wild-eddying swirl,
 Or thro' the mining outlet bocked,
 Down headlong hurl.

List'ning the doors an' winnocks rattle,
 I thought me on the ourie cattle,

“Dim-dark’ning thro’ the flaky show’r.”



Or silly sheep, wha bide this brattle
O' winter war,
And thro' the drift, deep-lairing, sprattle,
Beneath a scar.

Ilk happing bird, wee, helpless thing
That, in the merry months o' spring,
Delighted me to hear thee sing,
What comes o' thee?
Whare wilt thou cow'r thy chittering wing,
An' close thy e'e?

Ev'n you on murd'ring errands toil'd,
Lone from your savage homes exil'd,
The blood-stain'd roost, and sheep-cote spoil'd,
My heart forgets,
While pityless the tempest wild
Sore on you beats.

Now Phœbe, in her midnight reign,
Dark muffl'd, view'd the dreary plain :
Still crowding thoughts, a pensive train,
Rose in my soul,
When on my ear this plaintive strain,
Slow, solemn, stole —

“ Blow, blow, ye winds, with heavier gust !
And freeze, thou bitter-biting frost !
Descend, ye chilly, smothering snows !
Not all your rage, as now united, shows
More hard unkindness, unrelenting,
Vengeful malice, unrepenting,
Than heav’n-illumin’d man on brother man
bestows !
See stern Oppression’s iron grip,
Or mad Ambition’s gory hand,
Sending, like blood-hounds from the slip,
Woe, want, and murder o’er a land !
Ev’n in the peaceful rural vale,
Truth, weeping, tells the mournful tale,
How pamper’d Luxury, Flatt’ry by her side,
The parasite empoisoning her ear,
With all the servile wretches in the rear,
Looks o’er proud property, extended wide ;
And eyes the simple rustic hind,
Whose toil upholds the glitt’ring show,
A creature of another kind,
Some coarser substance, unrefin’d,
Plac’d for her lordly use thus far, thus vile,
below !
Where, where is Love’s fond, tender throe,

With lordly Honour's lofty brow,
The pow'rs you proudly own?
Is there, beneath Love's noble name,
Can harbour, dark, the selfish aim,
To bless himself alone!

Mark maiden-innocence a prey
To love-pretending snares,
This boasted Honour turns away,
Shunning soft Pity's rising sway,
Regardless of the tears, and unavailing pray'rs!
Perhaps, this hour, in mis'ry's squalid nest
She strains your infant to her joyless breast,
And with a mother's fears shrinks at the rock-
ing blast!

O ye! who, sunk in beds of down,
Feel not a want but what yourselves create,
Think, for a moment, on his wretched fate,
Whom friends and fortune quite disown!
Ill-satisfied keen nature's clam'rous call,
Stretch'd on his straw he lays himself to
sleep,
While thro' the ragged roof and chinky wall,
Chill o'er his slumbers, piles the drift
heap!
Think on the dungeon's grim confine,

Where Guilt and poor Misfortune pine !
Guilt, erring man, relenting view !
But shall thy legal rage pursue
The wretch, already crushed low
By cruel Fortune's undeserved blow ?
Affliction's sons are brothers in distress ;
A brother to relieve, how exquisite the bliss ! ”

I heard nae mair, for Chanticleer
Shook off the pouthery snaw,
And hail'd the morning with a cheer,
A cottage-rousing crow.

But deep this truth impress'd my mind —
Thro' all His works abroad,
The heart benevolent and kind
The most resembles God.



WINTER.

HE wintry west extends his blast,
And hail and rain does blaw ;
Or the stormy north sends driving forth
The blinding sleet and snaw :
While, tumbling brown, the burn comes down,
And roars frae bank to brae ;
And bird and beast in covert rest,
And pass the heartless day.

“The sweeping blast, the sky o’ercast,”
The joyless winter-day,
Let others fear, to me more dear
Than all the pride of May :
The tempest’s howl, it soothes my soul,
My griefs it seems to join :
The leafless trees my fancy please,
Their fate resembles mine !

Thou Pow’r Supreme, whose mighty scheme
These woes of mine fulfil,
Here, firm, I rest, they must be best,
Because they are Thy will !

Then all I want (O, do thou grant
This one request of mine !)
Since to enjoy thou dost deny,
Assist me to resign.

MAN WAS MADE TO MOURN.



HIEN chill November's surly blast
Made fields and forests bare,
One ev'ning, as I wander'd forth
Along the banks of Ayr,
I spy'd a man, whose aged step
Seem'd weary, worn with care ;
His face was furrow'd o'er with years,
And hoary was his hair.

Young stranger, whither wand'rest thou ?
Began the rev'rend sage ;
Does thirst of wealth thy step constrain,
Or youthful pleasure's rage ?
Or, haply, prest with cares and woes,
Too soon thou hast began
To wander forth, with me, to mourn
The miseries of Man.

“Young stranger, whither wand’rest thou?”



The sun that overhangs yon moors,
Outspreading far and wide,
Where hundreds labour to support
A haughty lordling's pride ;
I 've seen you weary winter-sun
Twice forty times return ;
And ev'ry time has added proofs
That Man was made to mourn.

O man ! while in thy early years,
How prodigal of time !
Mis-spending all thy precious hours,
Thy glorious youthful prime !
Alternate follies take the sway ;
Licentious passions burn ;
Which tenfold force give nature's law,
That Man was made to mourn.

Look not alone on youthful prime,
Or manhood's active might ;
Man then is useful to his kind,
Supported is his right.
But see him on the edge of life,
With cares and sorrows worn ;

Then age and want, O, ill-match'd pair !
Show Man was made to mourn.

A few seem favourites of fate,
In pleasure's lap carest ;
Yet, think not all the rich and great
Are likewise truly blest.
But, oh ! what crowds in ev'ry land
Are wretched and forlorn.
Thro' weary life this lesson learn,
That Man was made to mourn.

Many and sharp the num'rous ills
Inwoven with our frame !
More pointed still we make ourselves,
Regret, remorse, and shame !
And man, whose heav'n-erected face
The smiles of love adorn,
Man's inhumanity to man
Makes countless thousands mourn !

See yonder poor, o'erlabour'd wight,
So abject, mean, and vile,
Who begs a brother of the earth
To give him leave to toil ;

And see his lordly fellow-worm
The poor petition spurn,
Unmindful, tho' a weeping wife
And helpless offspring mourn.

If I'm design'd you lordling's slave —
By Nature's law design'd, —
Why was an independent wish
E'er planted in my mind?
If not, why am I subject to
His cruelty or scorn?
Or why has man the will and pow'r
To make his fellow mourn?

Yet, let not this too much, my son,
Disturb thy youthful breast :
This partial view of human kind
Is surely not the last !
The poor, oppressed, honest man
Had never, sure, been born,
Had there not been some recompense
To comfort those that mourn !

O death ! the poor man's dearest friend,
The kindest and the best !

Welcome the hour my aged limbs
Are laid with thee at rest !
The great, the wealthy, fear thy blow
From pomp and pleasure torn ;
But, oh ! a blest relief to those
That weary-laden mourn !

TO A MOUNTAIN DAISY,

ON TURNING ONE DOWN WITH THE PLOUGH, IN
APRIL, 1786.



EE, modest, crimson-tipped flow'r,
Thou 's met me in an evil hour ;
For I maun crush amang the stoure
Thy slender stem :
To spare thee now is past my pow'r,
Thou bonnie gem.

Alas ! it's no thy neebor sweet,
The bonnie Lark, companion meet !
Bending thee 'mang the dewy weet !
Wi' spreckl'd breast,

When upward-springing, blythe, to greet
The purpling east.

Could blew the bitter-biting north
Upon thy early, humble birth ;
Yet cheerfully thou glinted forth
Amid the storm,
Scarce rear'd above thy parent-earth
Thy tender form.

The flaunting flow'rs our gardens yield
High shelt'ring woods and wa's maun shield,
But thou beneath the random bield
O' clod, or stane,
Adorns the histie stibble-field,
Unseen, alane.

There, in thy scanty mantle clad,
Thy snawy bosom sunward spread,
Thou lifts thy unassuming head
In humble guise ;
But now the share uptears thy bed,
And low thou lies !

Such is the fate of artless Maid,
Sweet flow'ret of the rural shade !

By love's simplicity betray'd,
 And guileless trust,
Till she, like thee, all soil'd, is laid
 Low i' the dust.

Such is the fate of simple Bard,
On life's rough ocean luckless starr'd !
Unskilful he to note the card
 Of prudent lore,
Till billows rage, and gales blow hard,
 And overwhelm him o'er !

Such fate to suffering worth is giv'n,
Who long with wants and woes has striv'n,
By human pride or cunning driv'n
 To mis'ry's brink,
Till, wrench'd of ev'ry stay but Heav'n,
 He, ruin'd, sink !

Ev'n thou who mourn'st the Daisy's fate,
That fate is thine — no distant date ;
Stern Ruin's ploughshare drives, elate, .
 Full on thy bloom,
Till crush'd beneath the furrow's weight
 Shall be thy doom !

EPISTLE TO A YOUNG FRIEND.*

MAY, 1786.



LANG hae thought, my youthfu'
friend,

A something to have sent you,
Tho' it should serve nae ither end
Than just a kind memento ;
But how the subject-theme may gang,
Let time and chance determine ;
Perhaps, it may turn out a sang,
Perhaps turn out a sermon.

Ye 'll try the world soon, my lad,
And Andrew dear, believe me,
Ye 'll find mankind an unco squad,
And muckle they may grieve ye :
For care and trouble set your thought,
Ev'n when your end 's attained ;
And a' your views may come to nought,
Where ev'ry nerve is strained.

* Andrew Aiken, of Ayr, son of the friend to whom Burns inscribed "The Cotter's Saturday Night."

I'll no say, men are villains a' :
The real, harden'd wicked,
Wha hae nae cheek but human law,
Are to a few restricked ;
But, Och ! mankind are unco weak,
An' little to be trusted ;
If self the wavering balance shake,
It's rarely right adjusted !

Yet they wha fa' in fortune's strife,
Their fate we should na censure,
For still th' important end of life
They equally may answer ;
A man may hae an honest heart,
Tho' poortith hourly stare him ;
A man may tak a neebor's part,
Yet hae nae cash to spare him.

Aye free, aff-han' your story tell,
When wi' a bosom crony ;
But still keep something to yoursel
Ye scarcely tell to ony.
Conceal yoursel as weel's ye can
Frae critical dissection ;
But keek thro' ev'ry other man,
Wi' sharpen'd, sly inspection.

The sacred love o' weel-plac'd love,
 Luxuriantly indulge it ;
 But never tempt th' illicit rove,
 Tho' naething should divulge it ;
 I wave the quantum o' the sin,
 The hazard o' concealing ;
 But Och ! it hardens a' within,
 And petrifies the feeling !

To catch dame Fortune's golden smile,
 Assiduous wait upon her ;
 And gather gear by ev'ry wile
 That 's justify'd by honour ;
 Not for to hide it in a hedge,
 Nor for a train attendant ;
 But for the glorious privilege
 Of being independent.

The fear o' hell 's a hangman's whip,
 To haud the wretch in order ;
 But where ye feel your honour grip,
 Let that aye be your border ;
 Its slightest touches, instant pause —
 Debar a' side pretences ;
 And resolutely keep its laws,
 Uncaring consequences.

The great Creator to revere,
Must sure become the creature ;
But still the preaching cant forbear,
And ev'n the rigid feature ;
Yet ne'er with wits profane to range,
Be complaisance extended ;
An Atheist-laugh 's a poor exchange
For Deity offended !

When ranting round in pleasure's ring,
Religion may be blinded ;
Or, if she gie a random sting,
It may be a little minded ;
But when on life we 're tempest-driv'n,
A conscience but a canker —
A correspondence fix'd wi' Heav'n
Is sure a noble anchor !

Adieu, dear, amiable Youth !
Your heart can ne'er be wanting !
May prudence, fortitude, and truth,
Erect your brow undaunting !
In ploughman phrase, "God send you speed,"
Still daily to grow wiser ;
And may you better reckon the rede,
Than ever did th' Adviser !

ELEGY ON CAPTAIN MATTHEW
HENDERSON,

A GENTLEMAN WHO HELD THE PATENT FOR HIS
HONOURS IMMEDIATELY FROM ALMIGHTY GOD.

But now his radiant course is run,
For Matthew's course was bright :
His soul was like the glorious sun,
A matchless, Heav'nly Light.



DEATH ! thou tyrant fell and bloody !
The meikle devil wi' a woodie
Haurl thee hame to his black smiddie,
O'er burcheon hides,
And like stock-fish come o'er his studdie
Wi' thy auld sides !

He's gane, he's gane ! he's frae us torn,
The ae best fellow e'er was born !
Thee, Matthew, Nature's sel shall mourn
By wood and wild,
Where, haply, Pity strays forlorn, .
Frae man exil'd.

Ye hills, near neebors o' the starns,
That proudly cock your cresting cairns !
Ye cliffs, the haunts of sailing yearns,
Where echo slumbers !
Come join, ye Nature's sturdiest bairns,
My wailing numbers !

Mourn, ilka grove the cushat kens !
Ye haz'lly shaws and briery dens !
Ye burnies, wimplin down your glens,
Wi' toddlin din,
Or foaming strang, wi' hasty stens,
Frae lin to lin.

Mourn, little harebells o'er the lea ;
Ye stately foxgloves fair to see ;
Ye woodbines hanging bonnilie,
In scented bow'rs ;
Ye roses on your thorny tree,
The first o' flow'rs.

At dawn, when ev'ry grassy blade
Droops with a diamond at his head,
At ev'n, when beans their fragrance shed,
I' th' rustling gale,

Ye maukins whiddin thro' the glade,
Come join my wail.

Mourn, ye wee songsters o' the wood ;
Ye grouse that crap the heather-bud ;
Ye curlews calling thro' a clud ;
Ye whistling plover ;
And mourn, ye whirring paitrick brood :
He's gane for ever !

Mourn, sooty coots, and speckled teals,
Ye fisher herons, watching eels ;
Ye duck and drake, wi' airy wheels
Circling the lake ;
Ye bitterns, till the quagmire reels,
Rair for his sake.

Mourn, clam'ring craiks at close o' day,
'Mang fields o' flow'ring claver gay ;
And when ye wing your annual way
Frae our cauld shore,
Tell thae far warlds, wha lies in clay,
Wham we deplore.

Ye houlets, frae your ivy bow'r,
In some auld tree, or eldritch tow'r,

What time the moon, wi' silent glow'r,
Sets up her horn,
Wail thro' the dreary midnight hour
Till waukrife morn !

O rivers, forests, hills, and plains !
Oft have ye heard my canty strains ;
But now, what else for me remains
But tales of woe ;
And frae my een the drapping rains
Maun ever flow.

Mourn, Spring, thou darling of the year !
Ilk cowslip cup shall kep a tear :
Thou, Simmer, while each corry spear
Shoots up its head.
Thy gay, green, flow'ry tresses shear
For him that's dead !

Thou, Autumn, wi' thy yellow hair,
In grief thy sallow mantle tear !
Thou, Winter, hurling thro' the air
The roaring blast,
Wide o'er the naked world declare
The worth we've lost !

Mourn him, thou Sun, great source of light !
 Mourn, Empress of the silent night !
 And you, ye twinkling starnies bright,
 My Matthew mourn !
 For through your orbs he 's ta'en his flight,
 Ne'er to return.

O Henderson ! the man ! the brother !
 And art thou gone, and gone for ever !
 And hast thou crost that unknown river,
 Life's dreary bound !
 Like thee, where shall I find another,
 The world around ?

Go to your sculptur'd tombs, ye Great,
 In a' the tinsel trash o' state !
 But by thy honest turf I 'll wait,
 Thou man of worth !
 And weep the ae best fellow's fate
 E'er lay in earth.



LAMENT OF MARY, QUEEN OF SCOTS.

ON THE APPROACH OF SPRING.



OW Nature hangs her mantle green
On every blooming tree,
And spreads her sheets o' daisies white
Out owre the grassy lea :
Now Phœbus cheers the crystal streams,
And glads the azure skies ;
But nought can glad the weary wight
That fast in durance lies.

Now lav' rocks wake the merry morn,
Aloft on dewy wing ;
The merle, in his noontide bow'r,
Makes woodland echoes ring ;
The mavis mild, wi' many a note,
Sings drowsy day to rest :
In love and freedom they rejoice,
Wi' care nor thrall opprest.

Now blooms the lily by the bank,
The primrose down the brae ;



"But I, the Queen of a' Scotland,
Maun lie in prison strang."

The hawthorn 's budding in the glen,
And milk-white is the slae:
The meanest hind in fair Scotland
May rove their sweets amang :
But I, the Queen of a' Scotland,
Maun lie in prison strang.

I was the Queen o' bonnie France,
Where happy I hae been,
Fu' lightly rase I in the morn,
As blythe lay down at e'en :
And I'm the sov'reign of Scotland,
And mony a traitor there ;
Yet here I lie in foreign bands,
And never-ending care.

But as for thee, thou false woman,
My sister and my fae,
Grim vengeance, yet, shall whet a sword
That thro' thy soul shall gae :
The weeping blood in woman's breast
Was never known to thee ;
Nor th' balm that draps on wounds of woe
Frac woman's pitying e'e.

My son ! my son ! may kinder stars
Upon thy fortune shine ;
And may those pleasures gild thy reign,
That ne'er wad blink on mine !
God keep thee frae thy mother's faes,
Or turn their hearts to thee ;
And where thou meet'st thy mother's friend,
Remember him for me !

Oh ! soon, to me, may summer suns
Nae mair light up the morn !
Nae mair, to me, the autumn winds
Wave o'er the yellow corn !
And in the narrow house o' death
Let winter round me rave ;
And the next flow'rs, that deck the spring,
Bloom on my peaceful grave !

LAMENT FOR JAMES, EARL OF
GLENCAIRN.

HE wind blew hollow frae the hills,
By fits the sun's departing beam
Look'd on the fading yellow woods
That wav'd o'er Lugar's winding stream :

Beneath a craigy steep, a Bard,
Laden with years and meikle pain,
In loud lament bewail'd his lord,
Whom death had all untimely ta'en.

He lean'd him to an ancient aik,
Whose trunk was mould'ring down with
years;
His locks were bleached white with time,
His hoary cheek was wet wi' tears;
And as he touch'd his trembling harp,
And as he tun'd his doleful sang,
The winds, lamenting thro' their caves,
To echo bore the notes along.

“Ye scatter'd birds that faintly sing,
The reliques of the vernal quire!
Ye woods that shed on a' the winds
The honours of the aged year!
A few short months, and glad and gay,
Again ye'll charm the ear and e'e;
But nocht in all revolving time
Can gladness bring again to me.

“I am a bending aged tree,
That long has stood the wind and rain;

But now has come a cruel blast,
And my last hold of earth is gane :
Nae leaf o' mine shall greet the spring,
Nae simmer sun exalt my bloom ;
But I maun lie before the storm,
And ithers plant them in my room.

“ I 've seen sae mony changefu' years,
On earth I am a stranger grown ;
I wander in the ways of men,
Alike unknowing and unknown ;
Unheard, unpitied, unreliev'd,
I bear alane my lade o' care,
For silent, low, on beds of dust,
Lie a' that would my sorrows share.

“ And last (the sum of a' my griefs !)
My noble master lies in clay ;
The flow'r amang our barons bold,
His country's pride, his country's stay :
In weary being now I pine,
For a' the life of life is dead,
And hope has left my aged ken,
On forward wing for ever fled.

“Awake thy last sad voice, my harp !
The voice of woe and wild despair !
Awake, resound thy latest lay,
Then sleep in silence evermair !
And thou, my last, best, only friend,
That fillest an untimely tomb,
Accept this tribute from the Bard
Thou brought from fortune’s mirkest gloom.

“In Poverty’s low barren vale
Thick mists, obscure, involv’d me round ;
Though oft I turn’d the wistful eye,
No ray of fame was to be found :
Thou found’st me, like the morning sun
That melts the fogs in limpid air,
The friendless Bard, and rustic song,
Became alike thy fostering care.

“Oh ! why has worth so short a date ?
While villains ripen gray with time
Must thou, the noble, gen’rous, great,
Fall in bold manhood’s hardy prime ?
Why did I live to see that day —
A day to me so full of woe ?

Oh ! had I met the mortal shaft
Which laid my benefactor low !

“The bridegroom may forget the bride
Was made his wedded wife yestreen;
The monarch may forget the crown
That on his head an hour has been ;
The mother may forget the child
That smiles sae sweetly on her knee ;
But I ’ll remember thee, Glencairn,
And a’ that thou hast done for me !”

DUNCAN GRAY.



DUNCAN GRAY came here to woo,
Ha, ha, the wooing o’t,
On blythe yule night when we were fou,
Ha, ha, the wooing o’t.
Maggie coost her head fu’ high,
Look’d asklent and unco skeigh,
Gart poor Duncan stand abeigh ;
Ha, ha, the wooing o’t.



“Duncan sigh’d baith out and in.”

Duncan fleech'd, and Duncan pray'd ;

Ha, ha, &c.

Meg was deaf as Ailsa Craig,

Ha, ha, &c.

Duncan sigh'd baith out and in,

Grat his een baith bleer't and blin',

Spak o' lowpin o'er a linn ;

Ha, ha, &c.

Time and chance are but a tide,

Ha, ha, &c.

Slighted love is sair to bide,

Ha, ha, &c.

Shall I, like a fool, quoth he,

For a haughty hizzie die ?

She may gae to — France for me !

Ha, ha, &c.

How it comes let doctors tell,

Ha, ha, &c.

Meg grew sick — as he grew well,

Ha, ha, &c.

Something in her bosom wrings,

For relief a sigh she brings ;

And O, her een, they spak sic things !
Ha, ha, &c.

Duncan was a lad o' grace,
Ha, ha, &c.

Maggie's was a piteous case,
Ha, ha, &c.

Duncan could na be her death,
Swelling pity smoor'd his wrath ;
Now they're crouse and cantie baith,
Ha, ha, the wooing o't.

I LOVE MY JEAN.



F a' the airts the wind can blaw,
I dearly like the west,
For there the bonnie lassie lives,
The lassie I lo'e best ;
There wild woods grow, and rivers row,
And monie a hill between ;
By day and night my fancy's flight
Is ever wi' my Jean.

I see her in the dewy flowers,
I see her sweet and fair ;
I hear her in the tunefu' birds,
I hear her charm the air :
There 's not a bonnie flower that springs
By fountain, shaw, or green ;
There 's not a bonnie bird that sings,
But minds me o' my Jean.

JOHN ANDERSON, MY JO.



JOHN ANDERSON, my jo, John,
When we were first acquent,
Your locks were like the raven,
Your bonnie brow was brent ;
But now your brow is beld, John,
Your locks are like the snaw ;
But blessings on your frosty pow,
John Anderson, my jo.

John Anderson, my jo, John,
We clamb the hill thegither ;
And monie a canty day, John,
We 've had wi' ane anither :

Now we maun totter down, John,
But hand in hand we'll go,
And sleep thegither at the foot,
John Anderson, my jo.

THE BANKS O' DOON.

E banks and braes o' bonnie Doon,
How can ye bloom sae fresh and
fair!

How can ye chant, ye little birds,
An' I sae weary, fu' o' care!

Thou'lt break my heart, thou warbling bird,
That wantons thro' the flowering thorn:
Thou minds me o' departed joys,
Departed — never to return.

Thou'lt break my heart, thou bonnie bird,
That sings beside thy mate;
For sae I sat, and sae I sang,
And wist na o' my fate.

Aft hae I rov'd by bonnie Doon,
To see the rose and woodbine twine;

And ilka bird sang o' its luve,
And fondly sac did I o' mine.

Wi' lightsome heart I pu'd a rose,
Fu' sweet upon its thorny tree ;
And my fause luvver stole my rose,
But ah ! he left the thorn wi' me.

AFTON WATER.

LOW gently, sweet Afton, among thy
green braes,
Flow gently, I 'll sing thee a song in
thy praise ;
My Mary 's asleep by thy murmuring stream,
Flow gently, sweet Afton, disturb not her
dream.

Thou stock-dove whose echo resounds thro'
the glen,
Ye wild whistling blackbirds in yon thorny
den,

Thou green-crested lapwing, thy screaming for-
bear,

I charge you disturb not my slumbering fair.

How lofty, sweet Afton, thy neighbouring hills,
Far mark'd with the courses of clear, winding
rills,

There daily I wander as noon rises high,
My flocks and my Mary's sweet cot in my eye.

How pleasant thy banks and green valleys
below,

Where wild in the woodlands the primroses
blow;

There oft as mild ev'ning weeps over the lea,
The sweet-scented birk shades my Mary and
me.

Thy crystal stream, Afton, how lovely it glides,
And winds by the cot where my Mary resides :
How wanton thy waters her snowy feet lave,
As gathering sweet flow'rets she stems thy
clear wave.

Flow gently, sweet Afton, among thy green
braes,

Flow gently, sweet river, the theme of my
lays ;

My Mary 's asleep by thy murmuring stream,
Flow gently, sweet Afton, disturb not her
dream.

A RED, RED ROSE.



MY luvè's like a red, red rose
That 's newly sprung in June :
O, my luvè's like the melodie
That 's sweetly play'd in tune.

As fair art thou, my bonnie lass,
So deep in luvè am I :
And I will luvè thee still, my dear,
Till a' the seas gang dry.

Till a' the seas gang dry, my dear,
And the rocks melt wi' the sun :
I will luvè thee still, my dear,
While the sands o' life shall run.

And fare thee weel, my only luvè !
And fare thee weel awhile !
And I will come again, my luvè,
Tho' it were ten thousand mile.

A VISION.



S I stood by yon roofless tower,
Where the wa'-flower scents the dewy
air,

Where the howlet mourns in her ivy bower,
And tells the midnight moon her care ;

The winds were laid, the air was still,
'The stars they shot along the sky ;
The fox was howling on the hill,
And the distant-echoing glens reply.

The stream, adown its haz'lly path,
Was rushing by the ruin'd wa',
Hasting to join the sweeping Nith,
Whase distant roarings swell and fa'.

The cauld blue north was streaming forth
Her lights, wi' hissing, eerie din ;
Athort the lift they start and shift,
Like fortune's favours, tint as win.

By heedless chance I turn'd mine eyes,
And, by the moonbeam, shook to see
A stern and stalwart ghaist arise,
Attir'd as minstrels wont to be.

Had I a statue been o' stane,
His darin look had daunted me ;
And on his bonnet grav'd was plain
The sacred posy — Libertie !

And frae his harp sic strains did flow,
Might rouse the slumbering dead to hear ;
But O, it was a tale of woe,
As ever met a Briton's ear !

He sang wi' joy his former day,
He weeping wail'd his latter times ;
But what he said it was nae play ;
I winna venture 't in my rhymes.

FAREWELL TO NANCY.



E fond kiss, and then we sever !

Ae fareweel, alas, for ever !

Deep in heart-wrung tears I 'll pledge
thee !

Warring sighs and groans I 'll wage thee.

Who shall say that Fortune grieves him,

While the star of hope she leaves him ?

Me, nae cheerfu' twinkle lights me ;

Dark despair around benights me.

I 'll ne'er blame my partial fancy,

Naething could resist my Nancy ;

But to see her, was to love her ;

Love but her, and love for ever.

Had we never lov'd sae kindly,

Had we never lov'd sae blindly,

Never met — or never parted,

We had ne'er been broken-hearted !

Fare thee weel, thou first and fairest !

Fare thee weel, thou best and dearest !

Thine be ilka joy and treasure,
Peace, enjoyment, love, and pleasure.
Ae fond kiss, and then we sever;
Ae fareweel, alas, for ever!
Deep in heart-wrung tears I 'll pledge thee,
Warring sighs and groans I 'll wage thee.

JOHN BARLEYCORN.

A BALLAD.



HERE were three Kings into the east,
Three Kings both great and high;
An' they hae sworn a solemn oath
John Barleycorn should die.

They took a plough and plough'd him down,
Put clods upon his head;
An' they hae sworn a solemn oath
John Barleycorn was dead.

But the cheerful Spring came kindly on,
And showers began to fall;
John Barleycorn got up again,
And sore surpris'd them all.

The sultry suns of Summer came,
And he grew thick and strong,
His head weel arm'd wi' pointed spears,
That no one should him wrong.

The sober Autumn enter'd mild,
When he grew wan and pale;
His bending joints and drooping head
Show'd he began to fail.

His color sicken'd more and more,
He faded into age;
And then his enemies began
To show their deadly rage.

They 've ta'en a weapon, long and sharp,
And cut him by the knee;
Then tied him fast upon a cart,
Like a rogue for forgerie.

They laid him down upon his back,
And cudgel'd him full sore;
They hung him up before the storm,
And turn'd him o'er and o'er.

They filled up a darksome pit
With water to the brim,

They heaved in John Barleycorn,
There let him sink or swim.

They laid him out upon the floor,
To work him farther woe ;
And still, as signs of life appear'd,
They toss'd him to and fro.

They wasted, o'er a scorching flame,
The marrow of his bones ;
But a miller us'd him worst of all,
For he crush'd him 'tween two stones.

And they hae ta'en his very heart's blood,
And drank it round and round ;
And still the more and more they drank,
Their joy did more abound.

John Barleycorn was a hero bold,
Of noble enterprise ;
For if you do but taste his blood,
'T will make your courage rise ;

'T will make a man forget his woe ;
'T will heighten all his joy :
'T will make the widow's heart to sing,
Tho' the tear were in her eye.

Then let us toast John Barleycorn,
Each man a glass in hand ;
And may his great posterity
Ne'er fail in old Scotland !

GREEN GROW THE RASHES.



HERE's nought but care on ev'ry han',
In ev'ry hour that passes, O ;
What signifies the life o' man,
An' 't were na for the lasses, O.

CHORUS.

Green grow the rashes, O ;
Green grow the rashes, O ;
The sweetest hours that e'er I spent,
Were spent among the lasses, O !

The warly race may riches chase,
An' riches still may fly them, O ;
An' tho' at last they catch them fast,
Their hearts can ne'er enjoy them, O.
Green grow, &c.

But gie me a canny hour at e'en,
My arms about my dearie, O ;
An' warly cares, an' warly men,
May a' gae tapsalteerie, O !
Green grow, &c.

For you sae douse, ye sneer at this,
Ye 're nought but senseless asses, O ;
The wisest man the warl' e'er saw,
He dearly lov'd the lasses, O.
Green grow, &c.

Auld Nature swears, the lovely dears
Her noblest work she classes, O ;
Her 'prentice han' she tried on man,
An' then she made the lasses, O.
Green grow, &c.

HIGHLAND MARY.



By the banks, and braes, and streams around
The castle o' Montgomery,
Green be your woods, and fair your
flowers,
Your waters never drumlie !

There simmer first unfold her robes,
And there the langest tarry;
For there I took the last fareweel
O' my sweet Highland Mary.

How sweetly bloom'd the gay green birk,
How rich the hawthorn's blossom,
As underneath their fragrant shade,
I clasp'd her to my bosom !
The golden hours, on angel wings,
Flew o'er me and my dearie ;
For dear to me, as light and life,
Was my sweet Highland Mary.

Wi' monie a vow, and lock'd embrace,
Our parting was fu' tender ;
And, pledging aft to meet again,
We tore oursels asunder ;
But oh ! fell death's untimely frost,
That nipt my flower sae early !
Now green 's the sod, and cauld 's the clay,
That wraps my Highland Mary !

O pale, pale now, those rosy lips,
I aft hae kiss'd sae fondly !

And closed for aye the sparkling glance,
That dwelt on me sac kindly !
And mould'ring now in silent dust,
That heart that lo'ed me dearly !
But still within my bosom's core
Shall live my Highland Mary.

AULD LANG SYNE.



SHOULD auld acquaintance be forgot,
And never brought to min' ?
Should auld acquaintance be forgot,
And days o' lang syne ?

CHORUS.

For auld lang syne, my dear,
For auld lang syne,
We 'll tak a cup o' kindness yet,
For auld lang syne.

We twa hae run about the braes,
And pu'd the gowans fine ;

But we've wander'd mony a weary foot
Sin auld lang syne.
For auld, &c.

We twa hae paidl't i' the burn,
From mornin sun till dine ;
But seas between us braid hae roar'd
Sin auld lang syne.
For auld, &c.

And here's a hand, my trusty fiere,
And gie's a hand o' thine ;
And we'll tak a right guid willie-waught,
For auld lang syne.
For auld, &c.

And surely ye'll be your pint-stowp,
And surely I'll be mine ;
And we'll tak a cup o' kindness yet
For auld lang syne.
For auld, &c.



BANNOCKBURN.

ROBERT BRUCE'S ADDRESS TO HIS ARMY.



COTS, wha hae wi' Wallace bled,
Scots, wham Bruce has aften led;
Welcome to your gory bed,
Or to victorie !

Now 's the day, and now 's the hour,
See the front o' battle lour :
See approach proud Edward's pow'r —
Chains and slaverie !

Wha will be a traitor knave ?
Wha can fill a coward's grave ?
Wha sae base as be a slave ?
Let him turn and flee !

Wha for Scotland's King and law
Freedom's sword will strongly draw,
Freeman stand, or freeman fa' ?
Let him follow me !

By Oppression's woes and pains !
By your sons in servile chains,
We will drain our dearest veins,
But they shall be free !

Lay the proud usurpers low !
Tyrants fall in every foe !
Liberty's in every blow !
Let us do, or die !

FOR A' THAT AND A' THAT.



S there, for honest poverty,
That hangs his head, and a' that ?
The coward-slave, we pass him by,
We dare be poor for a' that !
For a' that, and a' that,
Our toils obscure, and a' that ;
The rank is but the guinea stamp ;
The man's the gowd for a' that.

What tho' on hamely fare we dine,
Wear hodden-gray, and a' that ;

Gie fools their silks, and knaves their wine,
 A man's a man, for a' that.
 For a' that, and a' that,
 Their tinsel show, and a' that :
 The honest man, tho' e'er sae poor,
 Is King o' men for a' that.

Ye see yon birkie, ca'd a lord,
 Wha struts, and stares, and a' that ;
 Tho' hundreds worship at his word,
 He's but a coof for a' that :
 For a' that, and a' that,
 His riband, star, and a' that,
 The man of independent mind,
 He looks and laughs at a' that.

A prince can mak a belted knight,
 A marquis, duke, and a' that ;
 But an honest man's aboon his might,
 Guid faith, he mauna fa' that !
 For a' that, and a' that,
 Their dignities, and a' that,
 The pith o' sense, and pride o' worth,
 Are higher ranks than a' that.

Then let us pray that come it may,
As come it will for a' that ;
That sense and worth, o'er a' the earth,
May bear the gree, and a' that ;
For a' that, and a' that,
It's coming yet, for a' that ;
That man to man, the warld o'er,
Shall brothers be for a' that.

MARY MORISON.



MARY, at thy window be !

It is the wish'd, the trysted hour !
Those smiles and glances let me see
That mak the miser's treasure poor :
How blithely wad I bide the stoure,
A weary slave frae sun to sun,
Could I the rich reward secure,
The lovely Mary Morison.

Yestreen when to the trembling string
The dance gaed through the light
To thee my fancy took its wing, —
I sat, but neither heard nor saw :

Though this was fair, and that was braw,
And yon the toast of a' the town,
I sigh'd, and said amang them a',
"Ye are na Mary Morison."

O Mary, canst thou wreck his peace
Wha for thy sake wad gladly dee?
Or canst thou break that heart of his,
Whase only faut is loving thee?
If love for love thou wilt na gie,
At least be pity to me shown;
A thought ungentle canna be
The thought o' Mary Morison.

TO MARY IN HEAVEN.

HOU ling'ring star, with less'ning ray,
That lov'st to greet the early morn,
Again thou usher'st in the day
My Mary from my soul was torn.
O Mary! dear departed shade!
Where is thy place of blissful rest?
Seest thou thy lover lowly laid?
Hear'st thou the groans that rend his breast?

That sacred hour can I forget ?

Can I forget the hallow'd grove,
Where by the winding Ayr we met,
To live one day of parting love ?

Eternity will not efface

Thosè records dear of transports past ;
Thy image at our last embrace ;
Ah ! little thought we 't was our last !

Ayr gurgling kiss'd his pebbled shore,
O'erhung with wild woods, thick'ning green ;
The fragrant birch, and hawthorn hoar,
Twin'd am'rous round the raptur'd scene.
The flowers sprang wanton to be prest,
The birds sang love on ev'ry spray, —
Till too, too soon, the glowing west
Proclaim'd the speed of winged day.

Still o'er these scenes my mem'ry wakes,
And fondly broods with miser care !
Time but th' impression deeper makes,
As streams their channels deeper wear.
My Mary, dear departed shade !
Where is thy blissful place of rest ?
Seest thou thy lover lowly laid ?
Hear'st thou the groans that rend his breast ?

COMING THROUGH THE RYE.



COMING through the rye, poor body,

Coming through the rye,

She draiglet a' her petticoatie,

Coming through the rye.

Jenny's a' wat, poor body,

Jenny's seldom dry ;

She draiglet a' her petticoatie,

Coming through the rye.

Gin a body meet a body

Coming through the rye ;

Gin a body kiss a body —

Need a body cry ?

Gin a body meet a body

Coming through the glen,

Gin a body kiss a body —

Need the world ken ?

Jenny's a' wat, poor body ;

Jenny's seldom dry ;

She draiglet a' her petticoatie,

Coming through the rye.

HEY, THE DUSTY MILLER.

HEY, the dusty miller,
And his dusty coat;
He will win a shilling,
Or he spend a groat.
Dusty was the coat,
Dusty was the colour,
Dusty was the kiss,
That I got frae from the miller.

Hey, the dusty miller,
And his dusty sack;
Leeze me on the calling
Fills the dusty peck.
Fills the dusty peck,
Brings the dusty siller;
I wad gie my coatie
For the dusty miller.



MELROSE ABBEY



FAVORITE POEMS.

By SIR WALTER SCOTT.







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ILLUSTRATIONS.

Melrose Abbey *Frontispiece.*

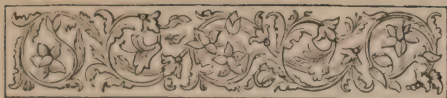
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BREATHES THERE THE MAN.

BREATHES there the man, with soul
so dead,
Who never to himself hath said,
This is my own, my native land !
Whose heart hath ne'er within him burned,
As home his footsteps he hath turned,
From wandering on a foreign strand !
If such there breathe, go, mark him well ;
For him no minstrel raptures swell ;
High though his titles, proud his name,
Boundless his wealth as wish can claim ;
Despite those titles, power, and pelf,
The wretch, concentr'd all in self,
Living, shall forfeit fair renown,
And, doubly dying, shall go down
To the vile dust from whence he sprung,
Unwept, unhonored, and unsung.

O Caledonia ! stern and wild,
Meet nurse for a poetic child !
Land of brown heath and shaggy wood,
Land of the mountain and the flood,
Land of my sires ! what mortal hand
Can e'er untie the filial band
That knits me to thy rugged strand ?
Still, as I view each well-known scene,
Think what is now and what hath been,
Seems as, to me, of all bereft,
Sole friends thy woods and streams were left,
And thus I love them better still,
Even in extremity of ill.
By Yarrow's stream still let me stray,
Though none should guide my feeble way,
Still feel the breeze down Ettrick break,
Although it chill my withered cheek ;
Still lay my head by Teviot stone,
Though there, forgotten and alone,
The bard may draw his parting groan.



MELROSE ABBEY.



F thou wouldst view fair Melrose
aright,
Go visit it by the pale moonlight ;
For the gay beams of lightsome day
Gild but to flout the ruins gray.
When the broken arches are black in night,
And each shafted oriel glimmers white ;
When the cold light's uncertain shower
Streams on the ruined central tower ;
When buttress and buttress, alternately,
Seem framed of ebon and ivory ;
When silver edges the imagery,
And the scrolls that teach thee to live and die ;
When distant Tweed is heard to rave,
And the owlet to hoot o'er the dead man's
grave, —
Then go — but go alone the while —
Then view St. David's ruined pile ;
And, home returning, soothly swear,
Was never scene so sad and fair !

*

*

*

By a steel-clenched postern door

They entered now the chancel tall ;
The darkened roof rose high aloof

On pillars lofty and light and small ;
The keystone, that locked each ribbed aisle,
Was a fleur-de-lis, or a quatre-feuille ;
The corbells were carved grotesque and grim ;
And the pillars, with clustered shafts so trim,
With base and with capital flourished around,
Seemed bundles of lances which garlands had
bound.

Full many a scutcheon and banner riven,
Shook to the cold night-wind of heaven,

Around the screened altar's pale ;
And there the dying lamps did burn,
Before thy low and lonely urn,
O gallant chief of Otterburne !

And thine, dark Knight of Liddesdale !
O fading honors of the dead !
O high ambition, lowly laid !

The moon on the east oriel shone
Through slender shafts of shapely stone,
By foliaged tracery combined ;

Thou wouldst have thought some fairy's hand
'Twixt poplars straight the osier wand

In many a freakish knot had twined,
Then framed a spell, when the work was
done,

And changed the willow wreaths to stone.
The silver light, so pale and faint,
Showed many a prophet, and many a saint,

Whose image on the glass was dyed ;
Full in the midst, his Cross of Red
Triumphant Michael brandishéd,

And trampled the apostate's pride.
The moonbeam kissed the holy pane,
And threw on the pavement a bloody stain.

LOVE THE LORD OF ALL.



T was an English ladye bright,
The sun shines fair on Carlisle
wall,

And she would marry a Scottish knight,
For Love will still be lord of all.

Blithely they saw the rising sun,
When he shone fair on Carlisle wall,
But they were sad ere day was done,
Though Love was still the lord of all.

'er sire gave brooch and jewel fine,
Where the sun shines fair on Carlisle wall ;
Her brother gave but a flask of wine,
For ire that Love was lord of all.

For she had lands, both meadow and lea,
Where the sun shines fair on Carlisle wall,
And he swore her death, ere he would see
A Scottish knight the lord of all.

That wine she had not tasted well,
The sun shines fair on Carlisle wall,
When dead in her true love's arms she fell,
For Love was still the lord of all.

He pierced her brother to the heart,
Where the sun shines fair on Carlisle
wall : —
So perish all would true love part,
That Love may still be lord of all !

And then he took the cross divine,
Where the sun shines fair on Carlisle wall,
And died for her sake in Palestine ;
So Love was still the lord of all.

Now all ye lovers, that faithful prove,
The sun shines fair on Carlisle wall,
Pray for their souls who died for love,
For Love shall still be lord of all !

ROSABELLE.



LISTEN, listen, ladies gay !
No haughty feat of arms I tell ;
Soft is the note, and sad the lay
That mourns the lovely Rosabelle.

“ Moor, moor the barge, ye gallant crew ;
And, gentle lady, deign to stay !
Rest thee in Castle Ravensheuch,
Nor tempt the stormy firth to-day.

“ The blackening wave is edged with white ;
To inch and rock the sea-mews fly ;

The fishers have heard the water-sprite
Whose screams forebode that wreck is nigh.

“Last night the gifted seer did view
A wet shroud swathed round lady gay ;
Then stay thee, fair, in Ravensheuch ;
Why cross the gloomy firth to-day ?”

“’T is not because Lord Lindesay’s heir
To-night at Roslin leads the ball,
But that my lady-mother there
Sits lonely in her castle-hall.

“’T is not because the ring they ride,
And Lindesay at the ring rides well,
But that my sire the wine will chide
If ’t is not filled by Rosabelle.”

O’er Roslin all that dreary night
A wondrous blaze was seen to gleam ;
’T was broader than the watch-fire’s light,
And redder than the bright moonbeam.

It glared on Roslin’s castled rock,
It ruddied all the copse-wood glen ;
’T was seen from Dryden’s groves of oak,
And seen from caverned Hawthornden.

Seemed all on fire that chapel proud
Where Roslin's chiefs uncoffined lie,
Each baron, for a sable shroud,
Sheathed in his iron panoply.

Seemed all on fire within, around,
Deep sacristy and altar's pale,
Shone every pillar foliage-bound,
And glimmered all the dead men's mail.

Blazed battlement and pinnet high,
Blazed every rose-carved buttress fair, —
So still they blaze, when fate is nigh
The lordly line of high Saint Clair.

There are twenty of Roslin's barons bold
Lie buried within that proud chapelle ;
Each one the holy vault doth hold,
But the sea holds lovely Rosabelle !

And each Saint Clair was buried there
With candle, with book, and with knell ;
But the sea-caves rung, and the wild winds
sung
The dirge of lovely Rosabelle.

THE MASS.

ITH naked foot, and sackcloth vest,
And arms infolded on his breast,
Did every pilgrim go ;
The standers-by might hear uneath,
Footstep, or voice, or high-drawn breath,
Through all the lengthened row :
No lordly look, nor martial stride,
Gone was their glory, sunk their pride,
Forgotten their renown ;
Silent and slow, like ghosts, they glide
To the high altar's hallowed side,
And there they knelt them down :
Above the suppliant chieftains wave
The banners of departed brave ;
Beneath the lettered stones were laid
The ashes of their fathers dead ;
From many a garnished niche around,
Stern saints and tortured martyrs frowned.

And slow up the dim aisle afar,
With sable cowl and scapular,

And snow-white stoles, in order due,
The holy fathers, two and two,

In long procession came :

Taper and host and book they bare,
And holy banner flourished fair

With the Redeemer's name.

Above the prostrate pilgrim band
The mitred abbot stretched his hand,

And blessed them as they kneeled ;

With holy cross he signed them all,
And prayed they might be sage in hall,

And fortunate in field.

Then mass was sung, and prayers were said,

And solemn requiem for the dead ;

And bells tolled out their mighty peal

For the departed spirit's weal ;

And ever in the office close

The hymn of intercession rose ;

And far the echoing aisles prolong

The awful burden of the song, —

DIES IRÆ, DIES ILLA

SOLVET SÆCLUM IN FAVILLA ;

While the pealing organ rung ;

Were it meet with sacred strain

To close my lay so light and vain,

Thus the holy fathers sung : —

HYMN FOR THE DEAD.

That day of wrath, that dreadful day,
When heaven and earth shall pass away,
What power shall be the sinner's stay ?
How shall he meet that dreadful day ?

When, shrivelling like a parchéd scroll,
The flaming heavens together roll ;
When louder yet, and yet more dread,
Swells the high trump that wakes the dead !

O, on that day, that wrathful day,
When man to judgment wakes from clay,
Be Thou the trembling sinner's stay,
Though heaven and earth shall pass away !

WHERE SHALL THE LOVER REST ?



HERE shall the lover rest
Whom the fates sever
From his true maiden's breast,
Parted forever ?

Where, through groves deep and high,
Sounds the far billow,
Where early violets die,
Under the willow.

Eleu loro. Soft shall be his pillow.

There, through the summer day,
Cool streams are laving ;
There, while the tempests sway,
Scarce are boughs waving ;
There, thy rest shalt thou take,
Parted forever,
Never again to wake,
Never, O never !

Eleu loro. Never, O never !

Where shall the traitor rest,
He, the deceiver,
Who could win maiden's breast,
Ruin, and leave her ?
In the lost battle,
Borne down by the flying,
Where mingles war's rattle
With groans of the dying.

Eleu loro. There shall he be lying.

Her wing shall the eagle flap
O'er the false-hearted ;
His warm blood the wolf shall lap,
Ere life be parted.
Shame and dishonor sit
By his grave ever ;
Blessing shall hallow it, —
Never, O never !
Eleu loro. Never, O never !

LOCHINVAR.



, young Lochinvar is come out of
the west,
Through all the wide border his steed
was the best ;
And save his good broadsword he weapon
had none,
He rode all unarmed, and he rode all alone.
So faithful in love, and so dauntless in
war,
There never was knight like the young Loch-
invar.

He stayed not for brake, and he stopped not
for stone,
He swam the Eske river where ford there
was none ;
But, ere he alighted at Netherby gate,
The bride had consented, the gallant came
late :
For a laggard in love and a dastard in war
Was to wed the fair Ellen of brave Loch-
invar.

So boldly he entered the Netherby Hall,
Among bridesmen, and kinsmen, and broth-
ers, and all :
Then spoke the bride's father, his hand on
his sword,
(For the poor craven bridegroom said never
a word,)
“ O, come ye in peace here, or come ye in war,
Or to dance at our bridal, young Lord Loch-
invar ? ”

“ I long wooed your daughter, my suit you
denied ;
Love swells like the Solway, but ebbs like
its tide, —

And now I am come with this lost love of
mine
To lead but one measure, drink one cup of
wine.
There are maidens in Scotland more lovely
by far,
That would gladly be bride to the young
Lochinvar."

The bride kissed the goblet ; the knight took
it up,
He quaffed off the wine, and he threw down
the cup.
She looked down to blush, and she looked
up to sigh,
With a smile on her lips, and a tear in her eye.
He took her soft hand, ere her mother could
bar, —
"Now tread we a measure !" said young
Lochinvar.

So stately his form, and so lovely her face,
That never a hall such a galliard did grace ;
While her mother did fret, and her father
did fume ;

And the bridegroom stood dangling his bon-
net and plume ;
And the bridemaids whispered, " 'T were
better by far
To have matched our fair cousin with young
Lochinvar."

One touch to her hand, and one word in her
ear,
When they reached the hall-door, and the
charger stood near ;
So light to the croupe the fair lady he
swung,
So light to the saddle before her he sprung !
" She is won ! we are gone, over bank, bush,
and scaur ;
They'll have fleet steeds that follow," quoth
young Lochinvar.

There was mounting 'mong Græmes of the
Netherby clan ;
Forsters, Fenwicks, and Musgraves, they
rode and they ran :
There was racing and chasing on Cannobie
Lee,

But the lost bride of Netherby ne'er did
they see.

So daring in love, and so dauntless in war,
Have ye e'er heard of gallant like young
Lochinvar ?

DOUGLAS AND MARMION.



NOT far advanced was morning day,
When Marmion did his troop array
To Surrey's camp to ride ;
He had safe-conduct for his band,
Beneath the royal seal and hand,
And Douglas gave a guide.
The train from out the castle drew,
But Marmion stopped to bid adieu :
" Though something I might plain," he said,
" Of cold respect to stranger guest,
Sent hither by your king's behest,
While in Tantallon's towers I stayed,
Part we in friendship from your land,
And, noble Earl, receive my hand."
But Douglas round him drew his cloak,
Folded his arms, and thus he spoke :

“ My manors, halls, and bowers shall still
Be open, at my sovereign’s will,
To each one whom he lists, howe’er
Unmeet to be the owner’s peer.
My castles are my king’s alone,
From turret to foundation-stone, —
The hand of Douglas is his own :
And never shall in friendly grasp
The hand of such as Marmion clasp.”

Burned Marmion’s swarthy cheek like fire,
And shook his very frame for ire,
And — “ This to me ! ” he said, —
“ And ’t were not for thy hoary beard,
Such hand as Marmion’s had not spared
To cleave the Douglas’ head !
And, first, I tell thee, haughty peer,
He, who does England’s message here,
Although the meanest in her state,
May well, proud Angus, be thy mate :
And, Douglas, more I tell thee here,
Even in thy pitch of pride,
Here in thy hold, thy vassals near,
(Nay, never look upon your lord,
And lay your hands upon your sword,)

I tell thee, thou 'rt defied !
And if thou said'st, I am not peer
To any lord in Scotland here,
Lowland or Highland, far or near,
 Lord Angus, thou hast lied ! " —
On the earl's cheek the flush of rage
O'ercame the ashen hue of age :
Fierce he broke forth, — " And darest thou
 then
To beard the lion in his den,
 The Douglas in his hall ?
And hopest thou hence unscathed to go ? —
No, by Saint Bride of Bothwell, no !
Up drawbridge, grooms, — what, warder, ho !
 Let the portcullis fall."
Lord Marmion turned, — well was his need, —
And dashed the rowels in his steed,
Like arrow through the archway sprung,
The ponderous grate behind him rung ;
To pass there was such scanty room,
The bars, descending, razed his plume.

The steed along the drawbridge flies,
Just as it trembled on the rise :
Nor lighter does the swallow skim

Along the smooth lake's level brim :
And when Lord Marmion reached his band,
He halts, and turns with clenched hand,
And shout of loud defiance pours,
And shook his gauntlet at the towers.
"Horse ! horse !" the Douglas cried, "and
chase !"

But soon he reigned his fury's pace :
"A royal messenger he came,
Though most unworthy of the name.
A letter forged ! Saint Jude to speed !
Did ever knight so foul a deed !
At first in heart it liked me ill,
When the king praised his clerkly skill.
Thanks to Saint Bothan, son of mine,
Save Gawain, ne'er could pen a line :
So swore I, and I swear it still,
Let my boy-bishop fret his fill.
Saint Mary mend my fiery mood !
Old age ne'er cools the Douglas blood,
I thought to slay him where he stood.
'T is pity of him too," he cried :
"Bold can he speak, and fairly ride,
I warrant him a warrior tried."
With this his mandate he recalls,
And slowly seeks his castle halls.

BATTLE OF FLODDEN FIELD AND THE
DEATH OF MARMION.

LOUNT and Fitz Eustace rested still
With Lady Clare upon the hill ;
On which (for far the day was spent)
The western sunbeams now were bent.
The cry they heard, its meaning knew,
Could plain their distant comrades view :
Sadly to Blount did Eustace say,
“Unworthy office here to stay !
No hope of gilded spurs to-day. —
But see ! look up — on Flodden bent
The Scottish foe has fired his tent.”

And sudden as he spoke,
From the sharp ridges of the hill,
All downward to the banks of Till,
Was wreathed in sable smoke.
Volumed and fast, and rolling far,
The cloud enveloped Scotland's war,
As down the hill they broke ;
Nor martial shout, nor minstrel tone,
Announced their march ; their tread alone,

At times one warning trumpet blown,
At times a stifled hum,
Told England, from his mountain-throne
King James did rushing come.
Scarce could they hear or see their foes,
Until at weapon-point they close.
They close, in clouds of smoke and dust,
With sword-sway, and with lance's thrust ;
And such a yell was there,
Of sudden and portentous birth,
As if men fought upon the earth,
And fiends in upper air ;
O life and death were in the shout,
Recoil and rally, charge and rout,
And triumph and despair.
Long looked the anxious squires ; their eye
Could in the darkness naught descry.

At length the freshening western blast
Aside the shroud of battle cast ;
And, first, the ridge of mingled spears
Above the brightening cloud appears ;
And in the smoke the pennons flew,
As in the storm the white sea-mew.
Then marked they, dashing broad and far,

The broken billows of the war,
And pluméd crests of chieftains brave
Floating like foam upon the wave ;
But naught distinct they see :
Wide raged the battle on the plain ;
Spears shook, and falchions flashed amain ;
Fell England's arrow-flight like rain ;
Crests rose, and stooped, and rose again,
Wild and disorderly.

Amid the scene of tumult, high
They saw Lord Marmion's falcon fly :
And stainless Tunstall's banner white,
And Edmund Howard's lion bright,
Still bear them bravely in the fight ;
Although against them come
Of gallant Gordons many a one,
And many a stubborn Badenoch-man,
And many a rugged Border clan,
With Huntly and with Home.

Far on the left, unseen the while,
Stanley broke Lennox and Argyle ;
Though there the western mountaineer
Rushed with bare bosom on the spear,
And flung the feeble targe aside,

And with both hands the broadsword plied,
'T was vain : But Fortune, on the right,
With fickle smile, cheered Scotland's fight.
Then fell that spotless banner white,

The Howard's lion fell ;

Yet still Lord Marmion's falcon flew
With wavering flight, while fiercer grew
Around the battle-yell.

The Border slogan rent the sky !

A Home ! a Gordon ! was the cry :

Loud were the clanging blows ;

Advanced, — forced back, — now low, now
high,

The pennon sunk and rose ;

As bends the bark's mast in the gale,

When rent are rigging, shrouds, and sail,

It wavered 'mid the foes.

No longer Blount the view could bear :

" By heaven and all its saints ! I swear,

I will not see it lost !

Fitz-Eustace, you with Lady Clare

May bid your beads, and patter prayer, —

I gallop to the host."

And to the fray he rode amain,

Followed by all the archer train,

The fiery youth, with desperate charge,
Made, for a space, an opening large, —

 The rescued banner rose, —

But darkly closed the war around,
Like pine-tree, rooted from the ground,
 It sunk among the foes.

Then Eustace mounted too : yet stayed,
As loath to leave the helpless maid,

 When, fast as shaft can fly,
Bloodshot his eyes, his nostrils spread,
The loose rein dangling from his head,
Housing and saddle bloody red,

 Lord Marmion's steed rushed by ;
And Eustace, maddening at the sight,
 A look and sign to Clara cast,

 To mark he would return in haste,
Then plunged into the fight.

Ask me not what the maiden feels,

 Left in that dreadful hour alone :
Perchance her reason stoops or reels ;
 Perchance a courage, not her own,
 Braces her mind to desperate tone.

The scattered van of England wheels ;
 She only said, as loud in air

The tumult roared, "Is Wilton there?" —

They fly, or maddened by despair,
Fight but to die, — "Is Wilton there?"
With that, straight up the hill there rode

Two horsemen drenched with gore,
And in their arms, a helpless load,

A wounded knight they bore.

His hand still strained the broken brand ;
His arms were smeared with blood and
sand.

Dragged from among the horses' feet,
With dented shield, and helmet beat,
The falcon-crest and plumage gone,
Can that be haughty Marmion! . . .

Young Blount his armor did unlace,
And, gazing on his ghastly face,

Said, "By Saint George, he's gone!

That spear-wound has our master sped, —
And see the deep cut on his head!

Good-night to Marmion." —

"Unnurtured Blount! thy brawling cease :
He opes his eyes," said Eustace ; "peace!"

When, doffed his casque, he felt free air,
Around 'gan Marmion wildly stare :

“Where ’s Harry Blount? Fitz-Eustace
where?

Linger ye here, ye hearts of hare!
Redeem my pennon, — charge again!
Cry — ‘Marmion to the rescue!’ — Vain!
Last of my race, on battle-plain
That shout shall ne’er be heard again! —
Yet my last thought is England’s — fly,
To Dacre bear my signet ring:
Tell him his squadrons up to bring.
Fitz-Eustace, to Lord Surrey hie;
Tunstall lies dead upon the field,
His life-blood stains the spotless shield:
Edmund is down: — my life is reft;
The admiral alone is left.
Let Stanley charge with spur of fire, —
With Chester charge, and Lancashire,
Full upon Scotland’s central host,
Or victory and England’s lost.
Must I bid twice? — hence, varlets! fly!
Leave Marmion here alone — to die.”
They parted, and alone he lay;
Clare drew her from the sight away,
Till pain wrung forth a lowly moan,
And half he murmured, “Is there none,

Of all my halls have nurst,
Page, squire, or groom, one cup to bring
Of blessed water from the spring,
To slake my dying thirst !”

O woman ! in our hours of ease,
Uncertain, coy, and hard to please,
And variable as the shade
By the light quivering aspen made ;
When pain and anguish wring the brow,
A ministering angel thou !—
Searce were the piteous accents said,
When, with the baron’s casque, the maid
To the nigh streamlet ran :
Forgot were hatred, wrongs, and fears ;
The plaintive voice alone she hears,
Sees but the dying man.
She stooped her by the runnel’s side,
But in abhorrence backward drew ;
For, oozing from the mountain’s side,
Where raged the war, a dark-red tide
Was curdling in the streamlet blue.
Where shall she turn !— behold her mark
A little fountain cell,
Where water, clear as diamond-spark,

In a stone-basin fell.

Above, some half-worn letters say,
Drink. weary. pilgrim. drink. and. pray.
For. the. kind. soul. of. Sybil. Gray.

Who. built. this. cross. and. well.

She filled the helm, and back she hied,
And with surprise and joy espied

A monk supporting Marmion's head ;
A pious man, whom duty brought
To dubious verge of battle fought,
To shrive the dying, bless the dead.

Deep drank Lord Marmion of the wave,
And, as she stooped his brow to lave, —

“Is it the hand of Clare,” he said,

“Or injured Constance, bathes my head ?”

Then, as remembrance rose, —

“Speak not to me of shrift or prayer!

I must redress her woes.

Short space, few words, are mine to spare ;
Forgive and listen, gentle Clare !”

“Alas !” she said, “the while, —

O, think of your immortal weal !

In vain for Constance is your zeal ;

She — died at Holy Isle.”



"Deep drank Lord Marmion of the wave,
And, as she stooped his brow to lave."

Lord Marmion started from the ground,
As light as if he felt no wound :
Though in the action burst the tide,
In torrents, from his wounded side.
“ Then it was truth,” he said — “ I knew •
That the dark presage must be true.
I would the Fiend, to whom belongs
The vengeance due to all her wrongs,
 Would spare me but a day !
For wasting fire, and dying groan,
And priests slain on the altar stone,
 Might bribe him for delay.
It may not be ! — this dizzy trance —
Curse on yon base marauder’s lance,
And doubly cursed my failing brand !
A sinful heart makes feeble hand.”
Then, fainting, down on earth he sunk,
Supported by the trembling monk.

With fruitless labor, Clara bound,
And strove to stanch the gushing wound :
The monk, with unavailing cares,
Exhausted all the Church’s prayers.
Ever, he said, that, close and near,
A lady’s voice was in his ear,

And that the priest he could not hear
For that she ever sung,
*"In the lost battle, borne down by the flying,
Where mingles war's rattle with groans of the
dying!"*

So the notes rung ;—
"Avoid thee, Fiend ! — with cruel hand
Shake not the dying sinner's sand !
O, look, my son, upon yon sign
Of the Redeemer's grace divine ;
O, think on faith and bliss !—
By many a death-bed I have been,
And many a sinner's parting seen,
But never aught like this."
The war, that for a space did fail,
Now trebly thundering swelled the gale,
And — Stanley ! was the cry, —
A light on Marmion's visage spread,
And fired his glazing eye :
With dying hand, above his head,
He shook the fragment of his blade,
And shouted "Victory !—
Charge, Chester, charge ! On, Stanley, on !"
Were the last words of Marmion.

THE STAG HUNT.



HE stag at eve had drunk his fill,
Where danced the moon on Monan's
rill,

And deep his midnight lair had made
In lone Glenartney's hazel shade ;
But, when the sun his beacon red
Had kindled on Benvoirlich's head,
The deep-mouthed bloodhound's heavy bay
Resounded up the rocky way,
And faint, from farther distance borne,
Were heard the clanging hoof and horn.

As chief, who hears his warder call,
"To arms ! the foemen storm the wall,"
The antlered monarch of the waste
Sprung from his heathery couch in haste.
But, ere his fleet career he took,
The dew-drops from his flanks he shook ;
Like crested leader proud and high
Tossed his beamed frontlet to the sky ;
A moment gazed adown the dale,

A moment snuffed the tainted gale,
A moment listened to the cry,
That thickened as the chase drew nigh ;
Then, as the headmost foes appeared,
With one brave bound the copse he cleared,
And, stretching forward free and far,
Sought the wild heaths of Uam-Var.

Yelled on the view the opening pack :
Rock, glen, and cavern paid them back ;
To many a mingled sound at once
The awakened mountain gave response.
A hundred dogs bayed deep and strong,
Clattered a hundred steeds along,
Their peal the merry horns rung out,
A hundred voices joined the shout :
With hark and whoop and wild halloo,
No rest Benvoirlich's echoes knew.
Far from the tumult fled the roe,
Close in her covert cowered the doe,
The falcon, from her cairn on high,
Cast on the rout a wondering eye,
Till far beyond her piercing ken
The hurricane had swept the glen.
Faint, and more faint, its failing din

Returned from cavern, cliff, and linn,
And silence settled, wide and still,
On the lone wood and mighty hill.

Less loud the sounds of sylvan war
Disturbed the heights of Uam-Var,
And roused the cavern, where, 't is told,
A giant made his den of old ;
For ere that steep ascent was won,
High in his pathway hung the sun,
And many a gallant, stayed perforce,
Was fain to breathe his faltering horse,
And of the trackers of the deer,
Scarce half the lessening pack was near ;
So shrewdly on the mountain-side
Had the bold burst their mettle tried.

The noble stag was pausing now
Upon the mountain's southern brow,
Where broad extended, far beneath,
The varied realms of fair Menteith.
With anxious eye he wandered o'er
Mountain and meadow, moss and moor,
And pondered refuge from his toil,
By far Lochard or Aberfoyle.

But nearer was the copsewood gray
That waved and wept on Loch-Achray,
And mingled with the pine-trees blue
On the bold cliffs of Benvenue.
Fresh vigor with the hope returned,
With flying foot the heath he spurned,
Held westward with unwearied race,
And left behind the panting chase.

'T were long to tell what steeds gave o'er,
As swept the hunt through Cambusmore ;
What reins were tightened in despair,
When rose Benledi's ridge in air ;
Who flagged upon Bochastle's heath,
Who shunned to stem the flooded Teith, —
For twice that day, from shore to shore,
The gallant stag swam stoutly o'er.
Few were the stragglers, following far,
That reached the lake of Vennachar ;
And when the Brigg of Turk was won,
The headmost horseman rode alone.

Alone, but with unbated zeal,
That horseman plied the scourge and steel ;
For jaded now, and spent with toil,

Embossed with foam, and dark with soil,
While every gasp with sobs he drew,
The laboring stag strained full in view.
Two dogs of black Saint Hubert's breed,
Unmatched for courage, breath, and speed,
Fast on his flying traces came,
And all but won that desperate game ;
For, scarce a spear's length from his haunch,
Vindictive toiled the bloodhounds stanch ;
Nor nearer might the dogs attain,
Nor farther might the quarry strain.
Thus up the margin of the lake,
Between the precipice and brake,
O'er stock and rock their race they take.

The hunter marked that mountain high,
The lone lake's western boundary,
And deemed the stag must turn to bay,
Where that huge rampart barred the way ;
Already glorying in the prize,
Measured his antlers with his eyes ;
For the death-wound and death-halloo
Mustered his breath, his whinyard drew :—
But thundering as he came prepared,
With ready arm and weapon bared,

The wily quarry shunned the shock,
And turned him from the opposing rock ;
Then, dashing down a darksome glen,
Soon lost to hound and hunter's ken,
In the deep Trosachs' wildest nook
His solitary refuge took.
There, while close couched, the thicket shed
Cold dews and wild flowers on his head,
He heard the baffled dogs in vain
Rave through the hollow pass amain,
Chiding the rocks that yelled again.

Close on the hounds the hunter came,
To cheer them on the vanished game ;
But, stumbling in the rugged dell,
The gallant horse exhausted fell.
The impatient rider strove in vain
To rouse him with the spur and rein,
For the good steed, his labors o'er,
Stretched his stiff limbs, to rise no more ;
Then, touched with pity and remorse,
He sorrowed o'er the expiring horse.
" I little thought, when first thy rein
I slacked upon the banks of Seine,
That Highland eagle e'er should feed

On thy fleet limbs, my matchless steed !
Woe worth the chase, woe worth the day,
That costs thy life, my gallant gray !”

Then through the dell his horn resounds,
From vain pursuit to call the hounds.
Back limped, with slow and crippled pace,
The sulky leaders of the chase ;
Close to their master's side they pressed,
With drooping tail and humbled crest ;
But still the dingle's hollow throat
Prolonged the swelling bugle-note.
The owlets started from their dream,
The eagles answered with their scream,
Round and around the sounds were cast,
Till echo seemed an answering blast ;
And on the hunter hied his way,
To join some comrades of the day ;
Yet often paused, so strange the road,
So wondrous were the scenes it showed.



THE TROSACHS.



THE western waves of ebbing day
Rolled o'er the glen their level way ;
Each purple peak, each flinty spire,
Was bathed in floods of living fire.
But not a setting beam could glow
Within the dark ravines below,
Where twined the path in shadow hid,
Round many a rocky pyramid,
Shooting abruptly from the dell
Its thunder-splintered pinnacle ;
Round many an insulated mass,
The native bulwarks of the pass,
Huge as the tower which builders vain
Presumptuous piled on Shinar's plain.
The rocky summits, split and rent,
Formed turret, dome, or battlement,
Or seemed fantastically set
With cupola or minaret,
Wild crests as pagod ever decked,
Or mosque of Eastern architect.
Nor were these earth-born castles bare,

Nor lacked they many a banner fair ;
For, from their shivered brows displayed,
Far o'er the unfathomable glade,
All twinkling with the dew-drop's sheen,
The brier-rose fell in streamers green,
And creeping shrubs, of thousand dyes,
Waved in the west-wind's summer sighs.

Boon Nature scattered, free and wild,
Each plant or flower, the mountain's child.
Here eglantine embalmed the air,
Hawthorn and hazel mingled there ;
The primrose pale and violet flower
Found in each cliff a narrow bower ;
Foxglove and nightshade, side by side,
Emblems of punishment and pride,
Grouped their dark hues with every stain
The weather-beaten crags retain.
With boughs that quaked at every breath,
Gray birch and aspen wept beneath ;
Aloft, the ash and warrior oak
Cast anchor in the rifted rock ;
And, higher yet, the pine-tree hung
His shattered trunk, and frequent flung,
Where seemed the cliffs to meet on high,

His boughs athwart the narrowed sky.
Highest of all, where white peaks glanced,
Where glist'ning streamers waved and danced,
The wanderer's eye could barely view
The summer heaven's delicious blue ;
So wondrous wild, the whole might seem
The scenery of a fairy dream.

Onward, amid the copse, 'gan peep
A narrow inlet, still and deep,
Affording scarce such breadth of brim
As served the wild duck's brood to swim.
Lost for a space, through thickets veering,
But broader when again appearing,
Tall rocks and tufted knolls their face
Could on the dark blue mirror trace ;
And farther as the hunter strayed,
Still broader sweep its channels made.
The shaggy mounds no longer stood,
Emerging from entangled wood,
But, wave-encircled, seemed to float,
Like castle girdled with its moat ;
Yet broader floods extending still
Divide them from their parent hill,
Till each, retiring, claims to be
An islet in an inland sea.

And now, to issue from the glen,
No pathway meets the wanderer's ken,
Unless he climb, with footing nice,
A far-projecting precipice.
The broom's tough roots his ladder made,
The hazel saplings lent their aid ;
And thus an airy point he won,
Where, gleaming with the setting sun,
One burnished sheet of living gold,
Loch Katrine lay beneath him rolled,
In all her length far winding lay,
With promontory, creek, and bay,
And islands that, empurpled bright,
Floated amid the livelier light,
And mountains, that like giants stand,
To sentinel enchanted land.
High on the south, huge Benvenue
Down on the lake in masses threw
Crag, knoll, and mound, confusedly hurled,
The fragments of an earlier world ;
A wildering forest feathered o'er
His ruined sides and summit hoar ;
While on the north, through middle air,
Ben-an heaved high his forehead bare.

SOLDIER, REST ! THY WARFARE O'ER.



OLDIER, rest ! thy warfare o'er,
Sleep the sleep that knows not
breaking :

Dream of battled fields no more,
Days of danger, nights of waking.
In our isle's enchanted hall,
Hands unseen thy couch are strewing,
Fairy strains of music fall,
Every sense in slumber dewing.
Soldier, rest ! thy warfare o'er,
Dream of fighting fields no more :
Sleep the sleep that knows not breaking,
Morn of toil, nor night of waking.

“ No rude sound shall reach thine ear,
Armor's clang, or war-steed champ-
ing,
Trump nor pibroch summon here
Mustering clan, or squadron tramp-
ing.
Yet the lark's shrill fife may come
At the daybreak from the fallow,
And the bittern sound his drum,

Booming from the sedgy shallow.
Ruder sounds shall none be near,
Guards nor warders challenge here,
Here 's no war-steed's neigh and champing,
Shouting clans or squadrons stamping."

"Huntsman, rest ! thy chase is done,
While our slumberous spells assail ye,
Dream not, with the rising sun,
Bugles here shall sound reveillé.
Sleep ! the deer is in his den ;
Sleep ! thy hounds are by thee lying ;
Sleep ! nor dream in yonder glen
How thy gallant steed lay dying,
Huntsman, rest : thy chase is done,
Think not of the rising sun,
For at dawning to assail ye,
Here no bugles sound reveillé."



BOAT SONG.



AIL to the chief who in triumph advances !

Honored and blessed be the ever-green pine !

Long may the tree, in his banner that glances,
Flourish, the shelter and grace of our line !

Heaven send it happy dew,
Earth lend it sap anew,
Gayly to bourgeon, and broadly to grow,
While every Highland glen
Sends our shout back again,
“Roderigh Vich Alpine dhu, ho ! ieroe !”

Ours is no sapling, chance-sown by the fountain,
Blooming at Beltane, in winter to fade ;
When the whirlwind has stripped every leaf
on the mountain,
The more shall Clan-Alpine exult in her shade.

Moored in the rifted rock,
Proof to the tempest's shock,
Firmer he roots him the ruder it blow :
Menteith and Breadalbane, then,
Echo his praise again,
“ Roderigh Vich Alpine dhu, ho ! ieroe ! ”

Proudly our pibroch has thrilled in Glen
Fruin,
And Bannachar's groans to our slogan re-
plied ;
Glen Luss and Ross-dhu, they are smoking
in ruin,
And the best of Loch-Lomond lie dead on
her side.

Widow and Saxon maid
Long shall lament our raid,
Think of Clan-Alpine with fear and with
woe ;
Lennox and Leven-glen
Shake when they hear again,
“ Roderigh Vich Alpine dhu, ho ! ieroe ! ”

Row, vassals, row, for the pride of the High-
lands !

Stretch to your oars for the evergreen
pine!

O that the rosebud that graces yon islands
Were wreathed in a garland around him
to twine !

O that some seedling gem,
Worthy such noble stem,
Honored and blessed in their shadow might
grow !

Loud should Clan-Alpine then
Ring from her deepest glen,
“Roderigh Vich Alpine dhu, ho ! ieroe !”

CORONACH.

E is gone on the mountain,
He is lost to the forest,
Like a summer-dried fountain,
When our need was the sorest.
The fount reappearing
From the rain-drops shall borrow ;
But to us comes no cheering,
To Duncan no morrow !

The hand of the reaper
 Takes the ears that are hoary,
 But the voice of the weeper
 Wails manhood in glory.
 The autumn winds, rushing,
 Waft the leaves that are scarest,
 But our flower was in flushing
 When blighting was nearest.

Fleet foot on the correi,
 Sage counsel in cumber,
 Red hand in the foray,
 How sound is thy slumber !
 Like the dew on the mountain,
 Like the foam on the river,
 Like the bubble on the fountain,
 Thou art gone, and forever.

THE HEATH THIS NIGHT MUST BE MY BED.

 HE heath this night must be my bed,
 The bracken curtain for my head,
 My lullaby the warder's tread,
 Far, far from love and thee, Mary ;

To-morrow eve, more stilly laid,
My couch may be my bloody plaid,
My vesper-song thy wail, sweet maid !
It will not waken me, Mary !

I may not, dare not, fancy now
The grief that clouds thy lovely brow ;
I dare not think upon thy vow,
And all it promised me, Mary.
No fond regret must Norman know ;
When bursts Clan-Alpine on the foe,
His heart must be like bended bow,
His foot like arrow free, Mary.

A time will come with feeling fraught !
For, if I fall in battle fought,
Thy hapless lover's dying thought
Shall be a thought on thee, Mary :
And if returned from conquered foes,
How blithely will the evening close,
How sweet the linnet sing repose
To my young bride and me, Mary.



HYMN TO THE VIRGIN.



VE MARIA ! maiden mild !

Listen to a maiden's prayer !

Thou canst hear though from the
wild,

Thou canst save amid despair.

Safe may we sleep beneath thy care,

Though banished, outcast, and reviled —

Maiden ! hear a maiden's prayer ;

Mother, hear a suppliant child !

*Ave Maria !**Ave Maria !* undefiled !

The flinty couch we now must share

Shall seem with down of eider piled,

If thy protection hover there.

The murky cavern's heavy air

Shall breathe of balm if thou hast smiled ;

Then, Maiden ! hear a maiden's prayer,

Mother, list a suppliant child !

Ave Maria !

Ave Maria ! Stainless styled !

Foul demons of the earth and air,
From this their wonted haunt exiled,
Shall flee before thy presence fair.

We bow us to our lot of care,
Beneath thy guidance reconciled :
Hear for a maid a maiden's prayer,
And for a father hear a child !

Ave Maria !

LAY OF THE IMPRISONED HUNTSMAN.



Y hawk is tired of perch and hood,
My idle greyhound loathes his food,
My horse is weary of his stall,

And I am sick of captive thrall.

I wish I were as I have been,
Hunting the hart in forests green,
With bended bow and bloodhound free,
For that 's the life is meet for me.

I hate to learn the ebb of time
From yon dull steeple's drowsy chime,
Or mark it as the sunbeams crawl,

Inch after inch, along the wall.
 The lark was wont my matins ring,
 The sable rook my vespers sing ;
 These towers, although a king's they be,
 Have not a hall of joy for me.

No more at dawning morn I rise,
 And sun myself in Ellen's eyes,
 Drive the fleet deer the forest through,
 And homeward wend with evening dew ;
 A blithesome welcome blithely meet,
 And lay my trophies at her feet,
 While fled the eve on wing of glee, —
 That life is lost to love and me !

FITZ-JAMES AND RODERICK DHU.



HE Gael beheld him grim the while,
 And answered with disdainful smile :
 “ Saxon, from yonder mountain high,
 I marked thee send delighted eye
 Far to the south and east, where lay,
 Extended in succession gay,

Deep waving fields and pastures green,
With gentle slopes and groves between : —
These fertile plains, that softened vale,
Were once the birthright of the Gael :
The stranger came with iron hand,
And from our fathers reft the land.
Where dwell we now ? See, rudely swell
Crag over crag, and fell o'er fell.
Ask we this savage hill we tread,
For fattened steer or household bread ;
Ask we for flocks these shingles dry,
And well the mountain might reply :
'To you, as to your sires of yore,
Belong the target and claymore !
I give you shelter in my breast,
Your own good blades must win the rest.'
Pent in this fortress of the North,
Think'st thou we will not sally forth,
To spoil the spoiler as we may,
And from the robber rend the prey ?
Ay, by my soul ! — While on yon plain
The Saxon rears one shock of grain ;
While, of ten thousand herds, there strays,
But one along yon river's maze, —
The Gael, of plain and river heir,

Shall, with strong hand, redeem his share,
 Where live the mountain chiefs who hold
 That plundering Lowland field and fold
 Is aught but retribution true ?
 Seek other cause 'gainst Roderick Dhu."

Answered Fitz James : " And, if I sought,
 Think'st thou no other could be brought ?
 What deem ye of my path waylaid ?
 My life given o'er to ambuscade ?"

" As of a meed to rashness due :
 Hadst thou sent warning fair and true, —
 I seek my hound, or falcon strayed,
 I seek, good faith, a Highland maid, —
 Free hadst thou been to come and go ;
 But secret path marks secret foe.
 Nor yet, for this, even as a spy,
 Hadst thou, unheard, been doomed to die,
 Save to fulfil an augury."

" Well, let it pass ; nor will I now
 Fresh cause of enmity avow,
 To chafe thy mood and cloud thy brow.
 Enough, I am by promise tied
 To match me with this man of pride :
 Twice have I sought Clan-Alpine's glen

In peace ; but when I come again,
I come with banner, brand, and bow,
As leader seeks his mortal foe.
For love-lorn swain, in lady's bower,
Ne'er panted for the appointed hour,
As I, until before me stand
This rebel chieftain and his band !”

“ Have, then, thy wish !” — He whistled
shrill,
And he was answered from the hill ;
Wild as the scream of the curlew,
From crag to crag the signal flew.
Instant, through copse and heath, arose
Bonnets and spears and bended bows ;
On right, on left, above, below,
Sprung up at once the lurking foe ;
From shingles gray their lances start,
The bracken bush sends forth the dart,
The rushes and the willow-wand
Are bristling into axe and brand,
And every tuft of broom gives life
To plaided warrior armed for strife.
That whistle garrisoned the glen
At once with full five hundred men,

As if the yawning hill to heaven
 A subterranean host had given.
 Watching their leader's beck and will,
 All silent there they stood, and still.
 Like the loose crags whose threatening mass
 Lay tottering o'er the hollow pass,
 As if an infant's touch could urge
 Their headlong passage down the verge,
 With step and weapon forward flung,
 Upon the mountain-side they hung.
 The mountaineer cast glance of pride
 Along Benledi's living side,
 Then fixed his eye and sable brow
 Full on Fitz-James : " How say'st thou now ?
 These are Clan-Alpine's warriors true ;
 And, Saxon, — I am Roderick Dhu ! "

Fitz-James was brave : — Though to his heart
 The life-blood thrilled with sudden start,
 He manned himself with dauntless air,
 Returned the chief his haughty stare,
 His back against a rock he bore,
 And firmly placed his foot before :
 " Come one, come all ! this rock shall fly
 From its firm base as soon as I."

Sir Roderick marked, — and in his eyes
Respect was mingled with surprise,
And the stern joy which warriors feel
In foemen worthy of their steel.
Short space he stood — then waved his hand :
Down sunk the disappearing band ;
Each warrior vanished where he stood,
In broom or bracken, heath or wood ;
Sunk brand and spear and bended bow,
In osiers pale and copses low ;
It seemed as if their mother Earth
Had swallowed up her warlike birth.
The wind's last breath had tossed in air
Pennon and plaid and plumage fair, —
The next but swept a lone hillside,
Where heath and fern were waving wide :
The sun's last glance was glinted back,
From spear and glaive, from targe and jack, —
The next, all unreflected, shone
On bracken green and cold gray stone.



BATTLE OF BEAL' AN DUINE.



HERE is no breeze upon the fern,
No ripple on the lake,
Upon her eyry nods the erne,
The deer has sought the brake ;
The small birds will not sing aloud,
The springing trout lies still,
So darkly glooms yon thunder-cloud,
That swathes, as with a purple shroud,
Benledi's distant hill.
Is it the thunder's solemn sound
That mutters deep and dread,
Or echoes from the groaning ground
The warrior's measured tread ?
Is it the lightnings' quivering glance
That on the thicket streams,
Or do they flash on spear and lance
The sun's retiring beams ?
—I see the dagger-crest of Mar,
I see the Moray's silver star,
Wave o'er the cloud of Saxon war,
That up the lake comes winding far !
To hero bound for battle strife,

Or bard of martial lay,
'T were worth ten years of peaceful life,
One glance at their array !

Their light-armed archers far and near
Surveyed the tangled ground,
Their centre ranks, with pike and spear,
A twilight forest frowned,
Their barbed horsemen, in the rear,
The stern battalia crowned.
No cymbal clashed, no clarion rang.
Still were the pipe and drum ;
Save heavy tread, and armor's clang,
The sullen march was dumb.
There breathed no wind their crests to shake,
Or wave their flags abroad ;
Scarce the frail aspen seemed to quake,
That shadowed o'er their road.
Their vaward scouts no tidings bring,
Can rouse no lurking foe,
Nor spy a trace of living thing,
Save when they stirred the roe ;
The host moves like a deep-sea wave,
Where rise no rocks its power to brave,
High-swelling, dark, and slow.

The lake is passed, and now they gain
A narrow and a broken plain,
Before the Trosach's rugged jaws ;
And here the horse and spearmen pause,
While, to explore the dangerous glen,
Dive through the pass the archer-men.

At once there rose so wild a yell
Within that dark and narrow dell,
As all the fiends, from heaven that fell,
Had pealed the banner cry of hell !

Forth from the pass in tumult driven,
Like chaff before the wind of heaven,

The archery appear :

For life ! for life ! their plight they ply —
And shriek, and shout, and battle-cry,
And plaids and bonnets waving high,
And broadswords flashing to the sky,
Are maddening in the rear.

Onward they drive, in dreadful race,
Pursuers and pursued ;

Before that tide of flight and chase,
How shall it keep its rooted place,

The spearmen's twilight wood ? —

“Down, down,” cried Mar, “your lances down !

Bear back both friend and foe !”
Like reeds before the tempest’s frown,
That serried grove of lances brown
At once lay levelled low ;
And closely shouldering side to side,
The bristling ranks the onset bide —
“ We ’ll quell the savage mountaineer,
As their Tinchel cows the game !
They come as fleet as forest deer,
We ’ll drive them back as tame.”

Bearing before them, in their course,
The relics of the archer force,
Like wave with crest of sparkling foam,
Right onward did Clan-Alpine come.
Above the tide, each broadsword bright
Was brandishing like beam of light,
Each targe was dark below ;
And with the ocean’s mighty swing,
When heaving to the tempest’s wing,
They hurled them on the foe.
I heard the lance’s shivering crash,
As when the whirlwind rends the ash ;
I heard the broadsword’s deadly clang,
As if an hundred anvils rang !

But Moray wheeled his rearward rank
Of horsemen on Clan-Alpine's flank,
 " My banner-man, advance !
I see," he cried, " their column shake.
Now, gallants ! for your ladies' sake,
 Upon them with the lance ! " —
The horsemen dashed among the rout,
 As deer break through the broom ;
Their steeds are stout, their swords are out,
 They soon make lightsome room.
Clan-Alpine's best are backward borne, —
 Where, where was Roderick then !
One blast upon his bugle-horn
 Were worth a thousand men.
And reflux through the pass of fear
 The battle's tide was poured ;
Vanished the Saxon's struggling spear,
 Vanished the mountain sword.
As Bracklinn's chasm, so black and steep,
 Receives her roaring linn,
 As the dark caverns of the deep
 Suck the wild whirlpool in,
So did the deep and darksome pass
Devour the battle's mingled mass :
None linger now upon the plain,
Save those who ne'er shall fight again.

CHRISTMAS.

EAP on more wood! — the wind is
chill ;

But let it whistle as it will,
We'll keep our Christmas merry still.
Each age has deemed the new-born year
The fittest time for festal cheer :
Even, heathen yet, the savage Dane
At Iol more deep the mead did drain ;
High on the beach his galleys drew,
And feasted all his pirate crew ;
Then in his low and pine-built hall,
Where shields and axes decked the wall,
They gorged upon the half-dressed steer ;
Caroused in seas of sable beer ;
While round, in brutal jest, were thrown
The half-gnawed rib and marrow-bone,
Or listened all, in grim delight,
While scalds yelled out the joys of fight.
Then forth, in frenzy, would they hie,
While wildly loose their red locks fly,
And dancing round the blazing pile,

They make such barbarous mirth the while,
As best might to the mind recall
The boisterous joys of Odin's hall.

And well our Christian sires of old
Loved when the year its course had rolled,
And brought blithe Christmas back again,
With all his hospitable train.
Domestic and religious rite
Gave honor to the holy night ;
On Christmas Eve the bells were rung ;
On Christmas Eve the mass was sung ;
That only night in all the year,
Saw the stoled priest the chalice rear.
The damsel donned her kirtle sheen ;
The hall was dressed with holly green ;
Forth to the wood did merry-men go,
To gather in the mistletoe.
Then opened wide the baron's hall
To vassal, tenant, serf, and all ;
Power laid his rod of rule aside,
And Ceremony doffed his pride.
The heir, with roses in his shoes,
That night might village partner choose ;
The Lord, underogating, share

The vulgar game of "post and pair."
All hailed, with uncontrolled delight,
And general voice, the happy night
That to the cottage, as the crown,
Brought tidings of salvation down.

The fire, with well-dried logs supplied,
Went roaring up the chimney wide ;
The huge hall-table's oaken face,
Scrubbed till it shone the day to grace,
Bore then upon its massive board
No mark to part the squire and lord.
Then was brought in the lusty brawn,
By old blue-coated serving-man ;
Then the grim boar's head frowned on high,
Crested with bays and rosemary.
Well can the green-garbed ranger tell,
How, when, and where the monster fell ;
What dogs before his death he tore,
And all the baiting of the boar.
The wassail round, in good brown bowls,
Garnished with ribbons, blithely trowls,
There the huge sirloin reeked ; hard by
Plum-porridge stood, and Christmas pie ;
Nor failed old Scotland to produce,



“The fire, with well-dried logs supplied,
Went roaring up the chimney wide.”

At such high tide, her savory goose.
 Then came the merry maskers in,
 And carols roared with blithesome din ;
 If unmelodious was the song,
 It was a hearty note, and strong.
 Who lists may in their mumming see
 Traces of ancient mystery ;
 White shirts supplied the masquerade,
 And smutted cheeks the visors made ;
 But O, what maskers, richly dight,
 Can boast of bosoms half so light !
 England was merry England, when
 Old Christmas brought his sports again.
 'T was Christmas broached the mightiest ale ;
 'T was Christmas told the merriest tale ;
 A Christmas gambol oft could cheer
 The poor man's heart through half the year.

BRIGNALL BANKS.



BRIGNALL banks are wild and fair,
 And Greta woods are green,
 And you may gather garlands there,
 Would grace a summer queen.

And as I rode by Dalton hall,
Beneath the turrets high,
A maiden on the castle wall
Was singing merrily, —

“O, Brignall banks are fresh and fair,
And Greta woods are green ;
I'd rather rove with Edmund there,
Than reign our English queen.”

“If, maiden, thou wouldst wend with me,
To leave both tower and town,
Thou first must guess what life lead we,
That dwell by dale and down.
And if thou canst that riddle read,
As read full well you may,
Then to the greenwood shalt thou speed,
As blithe as Queen of May.”

Yet sung she, “Brignall banks are fair,
And Greta woods are green ;
I'd rather rove with Edmund there,
Than reign our English queen.

“I read you, by your bugle-horn,
And by your palfrey good,
I read you for a ranger sworn,

To keep the king's greenwood."

"A ranger, lady, winds his horn,

And 't is at peep of light ;

His blast is heard at merry morn,

And mine at dead of night."

Yet sung she, " Brignall banks are fair,

And Greta woods are gay ;

I would I were with Edmund there,

To reign his Queen of May !

" With burnished brand and musketoon,

So gallantly you come,

I read you for a bold dragoon,

That lists the tuck of drum."

" I list no more the tuck of drum,

No more the trumpet hear ;

But when the beetle sounds his hum,

My comrades take the spear.

And O, though Brignall banks be fair,

And Greta woods be gay,

Yet mickle must the maiden dare,

Would reign my Queen of May !

" Maiden ! a nameless life I lead,

A nameless death I'll die ;

The fiend whose lantern lights the mead
Were better mate than I!
And when I'm with my comrades met,
Beneath the greenwood bough,
What once we were we all forget,
Nor think what we are now.
Yet Brignall banks are fresh and fair,
And Greta woods are green,
And you may gather garlands there
Would grace a summer queen."

ALLEN-A-DALE.

 LLEN-A-DALE has no fagot for
burning,
Allen-a-Dale has no furrow for turn-
ing,
Allen-a-Dale has no fleece for the spinning,
Yet Allen-a-Dale has red gold for the win-
ning.
Come read me my riddle ! come hearken my
tale !
And tell me the craft of bold Allen-a-Dale.

The Baron of Ravensworth prances in pride,
And he views his domains upon Arkindale
side.

The mere for his net, and the land for his
game,

The chase for the wild, and the park for the
tame ;

Yet the fish of the lake, and the deer of the
vale,

Are less free to Lord Dacre than Allen-a-Dale.

Allen-a-Dale was ne'er belted a knight,
Though his spur be as sharp, and his blade
be as bright ;

Allen-a-Dale is no baron or lord,
Yet twenty tall yeomen will draw at his
word ;

And the best of our nobles his bonnet will
veil,

Who at Rere-cross on Stanmore meets Allen-
a-Dale.

Allen-a-Dale to his wooing is come ;
The mother, she asked of his household and
home ;

“Though the castle of Richmond stand fair
on the hill,
My hall,” quoth bold Allen, “shows gal-
lanter still ;
’T is the blue vault of heaven, with its cres-
cent so pale ;
And with all its bright spangles!” said
Allen-a-Dale.

The father was steel, and the mother was
stone ;
They lifted the latch, and they bade him be
gone ;
But loud, on the morrow, their wail and their
cry :
He had laughed on the lass with his bonny
black eye,
And she fled to the forest to hear a love-tale,
And the youth it was told by was Allen-a-
Dale !



ALICE BRAND.



WERRY it is in the good greenwood,
When the mavis and merle are
singing,
When the deer sweeps by, and the hounds are
in cry,
And the hunter's horn is ringing.

“O Alice Brand, my native land
Is lost for love of you ;
And we must hold by wood and wold,
As outlaws wont to do.

“O Alice, 't was all for thy locks so bright,
And 't was all for thine eyes so blue,
That on the night of our luckless flight,
Thy brother bold I slew.

“Now must I teach to hew the beech
The hand that held the glaive,
For leaves to spread our lowly bed,
And stakes to fence our cave.

“And for vest of pall, thy fingers small,
That wont on harp to stray,
A cloak must shear from the slaughtered deer,
To keep the cold away.”

“O Richard ! if my brother died,
’T was but a fatal chance ;
For darkling was the battle tried,
And fortune sped the lance.

“If pall and vair no more I wear,
Nor thou the crimson sheen,
As warm, we ’ll say, is the russet gray,
As gay the forest green.

“And, Richard, if our lot be hard,
And lost thy native land,
Still Alice has her own Richard,
And he his Alice Brand.”

’T is merry, ’t is merry, in good greenwood,
So blithe Lady Alice is singing ;
On the beech’s pride, and oak’s brown side,
Lord Richard’s axe is ringing.

Up spoke the moody Elfin King,
Who woned within the hill, —
Like wind in the porch of a ruined church,
His voice was ghostly shrill.

“ Why sounds yon stroke on beech and oak,
Our moonlight circle’s screen ?
Or who comes here to chase the deer,
Beloved of our Elfin Queen ?
Or who may dare on wold to wear
The fairies’ fatal green ?

“ Up, Urgan, up ! to yon mortal hie,
For thou wert christened man ;
For cross or sign thou wilt not fly,
For muttered word or ban.”

’T is merry, ’t is merry, in good greenwood,
Though the birds have stilled their sing-
ing ;
The evening blaze doth Alice raise,
And Richard is fagots bringing.

Up Urgan starts, that hideous dwarf,
Before Lord Richard stands,

And, as he crossed and blessed himself,
“I fear not sign,” quoth the grisly elf,
“That is made with bloody hands.”

But out then spoke she, Alice Brand,
That woman void of fear, —
“And if there’s blood upon his hand,
’T is but the blood of deer.”

“Now loud thou liest, thou bold of mood !
It cleaves unto his hand,
The stain of thine own kindly blood,
The blood of Ethert Brand.”

Then forward stepped she, Alice Brand,
And made the holy sign, —
“And if there’s blood on Richard’s hand,
A spotless hand is mine.

“And I conjure thee, Demon elf,
By Him whom Demons fear,
To show us whence thou art thyself,
And what thine errand here ?”

“It was between the night and day,
When the Fairy King has power,

That I sunk down in a sinful fray,
And, 'twixt life and death, was snatched away
To the joyless Elfin bower.

“But wist I of a woman bold,
Who thrice my brow durst sign,
I might regain my mortal mould,
As fair a form as thine.”

She crossed him once — she crossed him
twice —

That lady was so brave ;
The fouler grew his goblin hue,
The darker grew the cave.

She crossed him thrice, that lady bold ;
He rose beneath her hand
The fairest knight on Scottish mould,
Her brother, Ethert Brand !

Merry it is in good geeenwood,
When the mavis and merle are singing,
But merrier were they in Dunfermline gray,
When all the bells were ringing.



THE FRIAR OF ORDERS GRAY.

ND whither would you lead me
then ?”

Quoth the Friar of orders gray ;
And the ruffians twain replied again,
“ By a dying woman to pray.”

“ I see,” he said, “ a lovely sight,
A sight bodes little harm,
A lady as a lily bright,
With an infant on her arm.”

“ Then do thine office, Friar gray,
And see thou shrive her free !
Else shall the sprite that parts to-night,
Fling all its guilt on thee.

“ Let mass be said, and trentals read,
When thou ’rt to convent gone,
And bid the bell of St. Benedict
Toll out its deepest tone.”

The shrift is done, the Friar is gone,
Blindfolded as he came ; —

A WEARY LOT IS THINE, FAIR MAID. 93

Next morning all, in Littlecot Hall,
Were weeping for their dame.

Wild Darrell is an altered man,
The village crones can tell ;
He looks pale as clay, and strives to pray,
If he hears the convent bell.

If prince or peer cross Darrell's way,
He'll beard him in his pride, —
If he meet a Friar of orders gray,
He droops and turns aside.

A WEARY LOT IS THINE, FAIR MAID.



WEARY lot is thine, fair maid,
A weary lot is thine !
To pull the thorn thy brow to braid,
And press the rue for wine !
A lightsome eye, a soldier's mien,
A feather of the blue,
A doublet of the Lincoln-green, —
No more of me you knew,
My love !
No more of me you knew.

“ This morn is merry June, I trow, —
The rose is budding fain ;
But she shall bloom in winter snow
Ere we two meet again.”
He turned his charger as he spake,
Upon the river shore ;
He gave his bridle-reins a shake,
Said, “ Adieu forevermore,
My love !
And adieu forevermore.”

PROUD MAISIE IS IN THE WOOD.



PROUD Maisie is in the wood,
Walking so early ;
Sweet Robin sits on the bush,
Singing so rarely.

“ Tell me, thou bonny bird,
When shall I marry me ? ”
“ When six braw gentlemen
Kirkward shall carry ye.”

“Who makes the bridal bed,
Birdie, say truly?”

“The gray-headed sexton
That delves the grave duly.

“The glow-worm o’er grave and stone
Shall light thee steady ;
The owl from the steeple sing,
‘Welcome, proud lady.’”

REBECCA'S HYMN.

HEN Israel, of the Lord beloved,
Out from the land of bondage came,
Her fathers' God before her moved,
An awful guide in smoke and flame.
By day, along the astonished lands,
The cloudy pillar glided slow :
By night, Arabia's crimsoned sands
Returned the fiery column's glow.

There rose the choral hymn of praise,
And trump and timbrel answered keen,

And Zion's daughters poured their lays,
 With priest's and warrior's voice between.
No portents now our foes amaze,
 Forsaken Israel wanders lone :
Our fathers would not know Thy ways,
 And Thou hast left them to their own.

But present still, though now unseen !
 When brightly shines the prosperous day,
Be thoughts of Thee a cloudy screen
 To temper the deceitful ray.
And O, when stoops on Judah's path
 In shade and storm the frequent night,
Be Thou, long-suffering, slow to wrath,
 A burning and a shining light !

Our harps we left by Babel's streams,
 The tyrant's jest, the Gentile's scorn ;
No censer round our altar beams,
 And mute are timbrel, harp, and horn.
But Thou hast said, " The blood of goat,
 The flesh of rams, I will not prize ;
A contrite heart, a humble thought,
 Are mine accepted sacrifice."

WITHIN THAT AWFUL VOLUME LIES.



WITHIN that awful volume lies
The mystery of mysteries !
Happiest they of human race,
To whom God has granted grace
To read, to fear, to hope, to pray,
To lift the latch, and force the way ;
And better had they ne'er been born,
Who read to doubt, or read to scorn.

CLEVELAND'S SONGS.



LOVE wakes and weeps
While Beauty sleeps ;
O for Music's softest numbers,
To prompt a theme
For Beauty's dream,
Soft as the pillow of her slumbers !

Through groves of palm
Sigh gales of balm,

Fire-flies on the air are wheeling ;
While through the gloom
Comes soft perfume,
The distant beds of flowers revealing.

O wake and live !
No dream can give
A shadowed bliss, the real excelling ;
No longer sleep,
From lattice peep,
And list the tale that Love is telling.

FAREWELL ! farewell ! the voice you hear
Has left its last soft tone with you,
Its next must join the seaward cheer,
And shout among the shouting crew.

The accents which I scarce could form
Beneath your frown's controlling check
Must give the word, above the storm,
To cut the mast, and clear the wreck.

The timid eye I dared not raise,
The hand, that shook when pressed to thine,

Must point the guns upon the chase,
Must bid the deadly cutlass shine.

To all I love, or hope, or fear,
Honor, or own, a long adieu !
To all that life hast soft and dear,
Farewell, — save memory of you !

HALCRO'S SONG.

AREWEL to Northmaven,
Gray Hillswicke, farewell !
To the calms of thy haven,
The storms on thy fell ;
To each breeze that can vary
The mood of thy main,
And to thee, bonny Mary !
We meet not again.

Farewell the wild ferry,
Which Hacon could brave,
When the peaks of the Skerry
Were white in the wave.

There's a maid may look over
These wild waves in vain,
For the skiff of her lover, —
He comes not again.

The vows thou hast broke,
On the wild currents fling them;
On the quicksand and rock
Let the mermaiden sing them.
New sweetness they'll give her
Bewildering strain;
But there's one who will never
Believe them again.

O were there an island,
Though ever so wild,
Where woman could smile, and
No man be beguiled, —
Too tempting a snare
To poor mortals were given,
And the hope would fix there
That should anchor on heaven.



COUNTY GUY.



H ! County Guy, the hour is nigh,
The sun has left the lea,
The orange-flower perfumes the
bower,

The breeze is on the sea.
The lark, his lay who trilled all day,
Sits hushed his partner nigh ;
Breeze, bird, and flower confess the hour,
But where is County Guy ?

The village maid steals through the shade
Her shepherd's suit to hear ;
To Beauty shy, by lattice high,
Sings high-born cavalier.
The star of Love, all stars above,
Now reigns o'er earth and sky,
And high and low the influence know, —
But where is County Guy ?



SONG — WOMAN'S FAITH.

OMAN'S faith, and woman's trust —
Write the characters in dust ;
Stamp them on the running stream,
Print them on the moon's pale beam,
And each evanescent letter
Shall be clearer, firmer, better,
And more permanent, I ween,
Than the things those letters mean.

I have strained the spider's thread
'Gainst the promise of a maid :
I have weighed a grain of sand
'Gainst her plight of heart and hand ;
I told my true-love of the token,
How her faith proved light, and her word
 was broken :
Again her word and truth she plight,
And I believed them again ere night.



THE BONNETS OF BONNIE DUNDEE.



O the lords of convention 't was Claver'se who spoke,

"Ere the king's crown shall fall there
are crowns to be broke ;

So let each cavalier who loves honor and me
Come follow the bonnets of bonnie Dundee!"

*Come fill up my cup, come fill up my can ;
Come saddle your horses, and call up your
men ;*

*Come open the Westport and let us gang free,
And it's room for the bonnets of bonnie
Dundee !*

Dundee he is mounted, he rides up the street,
The bells are rung backward, the drums they
are beat ;

But the Provost, douce man, said, "Just e'en
let him be,

The gude toun is well quit of that deil of
Dundee!"

Come fill up my cup, etc.

As he rode down the sanctified bends of the
Bow

Ilk carline was flyting and shaking her pow ;
But the young plants of grace they looked
cowthie and slee,

Thinking, Luck to thy bonnet, thou bonnie
Dundee !

Come fill up my cup, etc.

With sour-featured whigs the grass-market
was thranged

As if half the west had set tryst to be hanged ;
There was spite in each look, there was fear
in each ee,

As they watched for the bonnets of bonnie
Dundee.

Come fill up my cup, etc.

These cowls of Kilmarnock had spits and had
spears,

And lang-hafted gullies to kill cavaliers ;
But they shrunk to close-heads, and the
causeway was free

At the toss of the bonnet of bonnie Dundee.

Come fill up my cup, etc.

He spurred to the foot of the proud castle rock,
And with the gay Gordon he gallantly spoke :
“ Let Mons Meg and her marrows speak twa
words or three,
For the love of the bonnet of bonnie Dundee.”
Come fill up my cup, etc.

The Gordon demands of him which way he
goes, —
“ Where’er shall direct me the shade of Mon-
trose !
Your grace in short space shall hear tidings
of me,
Or that low lies the bonnet of bonnie Dundee.
Come fill up my cup, etc.

“ There are hills beyond Pentland and lands
beyond Forth ;
If there ’s lords in the Lowlands, there ’s
chiefs in the north ;
There are wild Duniewassals three thousand
times three
Will cry ‘ Hoigh ! ’ for the bonnet of bonnie
Dundee.
Come fill up my cup, etc.

“There’s brass on the target of barked
 bull-hide,
There’s steel in the scabbard that dangles
 beside ;
The brass shall be burnished, the steel shall
 flash free,
At a toss of the bonnet of bonnie Dundee.
 Come fill up my cup, etc.

“ Away to the hills, to the caves, to the rocks ;
Ere I own a usurper, I ’ll couch with the fox ;
And tremble, false whigs, in the midst of
 your glee,
You have not seen the last of my bonnet and
 me.”
 Come fill up my cup, etc.

He waved his proud hand, and the trumpets
 were blown,
The kettle-drums clashed, and the horsemen
 rode on,
Till on Ravelston’s cliffs and on Clermiston’s
 lea
Died away the wild war-notes of bonnie
 Dundee.

*Come fill up my cup, come fill up my can ;
Come saddle the horses, and call up the men ;
Come open your doors and let me gae free,
For it's up with the bonnets of bonnie
Dundee !*

HELVELLYN.



CLIMBED the dark brow of the
mighty Helvellyn,

Lakes and mountains beneath me
gleamed misty and wide ;

All was still, save by fits, when the eagle was
yelling,

And starting around me the echoes re-
plied.

On the right, Striden-edge round the Red-
tarn was bending,

And Catchedicam its left verge was defending,
One huge, nameless rock in the front was
ascending,

When I marked the sad spot where the
wanderer had died.

Dark green was that spot 'mid the brown
 mountain heather,
 Where the pilgrim of nature lay stretched
 in decay,
Like the corpse of an outcast abandoned to
 weather,
 Till the mountain-winds wasted the ten-
 antless clay.
Nor yet quite deserted, though lonely ex-
 tended,
For, faithful in death, his mute favorite at-
 tended,
The much-loved remains of her master de-
 fended,
 And chased the hill-fox and the raven
 away.

How long didst thou think that his silence
 was slumber !
 When the wind waved his garment, how
 oft didst thou start !
How many long days and long weeks didst
 thou number,
 Ere he faded before thee, the friend of thy
 heart !

And, oh! was it meet that — no requiem read
 o'er him,
 No mother to weep, and no friend to deplore
 him,
 And thou, little guardian, alone stretched
 before him —
 Unhonored the pilgrim from life should
 depart?

When a prince to the fate of the peasant has
 yielded,
 The tapestry waves dark round the dim-
 lighted hall;
 With scutcheons of silver the coffin is shielded,
 And pages stand mute by the canopied pall;
 Through the courts, at deep midnight, the
 torches are gleaming;
 In the proudly arched chapel the banners are
 beaming;
 Far adown the long aisle sacred music is
 streaming,
 Lamenting a chief of the people should fall.

But meeter for thee, gentle lover of nature,
 To lay down thy head like the meek moun-
 tain lamb.

When, wildered, he drops from some cliff huge
in stature,
And draws his last sob by the side of his dam.
And more stately thy couch by this desert
lake lying,
Thy obsequies sung by the gray plover flying,
With but one faithful friend to witness thy
dying
In the arms of Helvellyn and Catchedicam.

THE MAID OF NEIDPATH.



LOVERS' eyes are sharp to see,
And lovers' ears in hearing ;
And love, in life's extremity,
Can lend an hour of cheering.
Disease had been in Mary's bower,
And slow decay from mourning,
Though now she sits on Neidpath's tower,
To watch her love's returning.

All sunk and dim her eyes so bright,
Her form decayed by pining,
Till through her wasted hand at night,
You saw the taper shining ;

By fits, a sultry hectic hue
Across her cheek was flying ;
By fits, so ashy pale she grew,
Her maidens thought her dying.

Yet keenest powers to see and hear
Seemed in her frame residing ;
Before the watch-dog pricked his ear,
She heard her lover's riding :
Ere scarce a distant form was kenned,
She knew, and waved to greet him ;
And o'er the battlement did bend,
As on the wing to meet him.

He came, — he passed, — an heedless gaze,
As o'er some stranger glancing ;
Her welcome, spoke in faltering phrase,
Lost in his courser's prancing. —
The castle arch, whose hollow tone
Returns each whisper spoken,
Could scarcely catch the feeble moan
Which told her heart was broken.

JOCK OF HAZELDEAN.



HY weep ye by the tide, ladie ?
Why weep ye by the tide ?
I'll wed ye to my youngest son,
And ye sall be his bride :
And ye sall be his bride, ladie,
Sae comely to be seen " —
But aye she loot the tears down fa'
For Jock of Hazeldean.

" Now let this wilfu' grief be done,
And dry that cheek so pale ;
Young Frank is chief of Errington
And lord of Langley-dale ;
His step is first in peaceful ha',
His sword in battle keen " —
But aye she loot the tears down fa'
For Jock of Hazeldean.

" A chain of gold ye sall not lack,
Nor braid to bind your hair,
Nor mettled hound, nor managed hawk,
Nor palfrey fresh and fair ;

And you the foremost o' them a'
Shall ride our forest-queen " —
But aye she loot the tears down fa'
For Jock of Hazeldean.

The kirk was decked at morning-tide,
The tapers glimmered fair ;
The priest and bridegroom wait the bride,
And dame and knight are there :
They sought her baith by bower and ha' ;
The ladie was not seen !
She's o'er the border, and awa'
Wi' Jock of Hazeldean.

PIBROCH OF DONUIL DHU.



PIBROCH of Donuil Dhu,
Pibroch of Donuil,
Wake thy wild voice anew,
Summon Clan Conuil.
Come away, come away,
Hark to the summons !
Come in your war array,
Gentles and commons.

Come from deep glen and
From mountain so rocky,
The war-pipe and pennon
Are at Inverlochy.
Come every hill-plaid,
And true heart that wears one ;
Come every steel blade,
And strong hand that bears one !

Leave untended the herd,
The flock without shelter ;
Leave the corpse uninterred,
The bride at the altar ;
Leave the deer, leave the steer,
Leave nets and barges :
Come with your fighting gear,
Broadswords and targes.

Come as the winds come
When forests are rended ;
Come as the waves come
When navies are stranded :
Faster come, faster come,
Faster and faster,
Chief, vassal, page, and groom,
Tenant and master.

Fast they come, fast they come ;
See how they gather !
Wide waves the eagle plume
Blended with heather.
Cast your plaids, draw your blades,
Forward each man set !
Pibroch of Donuil Dhu,
Knell for the onset !

THE DANCE OF DEATH.



IGHT and morning were at meeting
Over Waterloo ;
Cocks had sung their earliest greeting ;
Faint and low they crew,
For no paly beam yet shone
On the heights of Mount Saint John ;
Tempest clouds prolonged the sway
Of timeless darkness over day ;
Whirlwind, thunder-clap, and shower,
Marked it a predestined hour.
Broad and frequent through the night
Flashed the sheets of levin-light ;
Muskets, glancing lightnings back,

Showed the dreary bivouac
Where the soldier lay,
Chill and stiff, and drenched with rain,
Wishing dawn of morn again,
Though death should come with day.

'T is at such a tide and hour,
Wizard, witch, and fiend have power,
And ghastly forms through mist and shower
Gleam on the gifted ken ;
And then the affrighted prophet's ear
Drinks whispers strange of fate and fear
Presaging death and ruin near
Among the sons of men ; —
Apart from Albyn's war-array,
'T was then gray Allan sleepless lay ;
Gray Allan, who, for many a day,
Had followed, stout and stern,
Where, through battle's rout and reel,
Storm of shot and edge of steel,
Led the grandson of Lochiel,
Valiant Fassiefern.

'Lone on the outskirts of the host,
The weary sentinel held post,

And heard, through darkness far aloof,
The frequent clang of courser's hoof,
Where held the cloaked patrol their course,
And spurred 'gainst storm the swerving horse :
But there are sounds in Allan's ear
Patrol nor sentinel may hear,
And sights before his eye aghast
Invisible to them have passed,

When down the destined plain,
'Twixt Britain and the bands of France,
Wild as marsh-borne meteor's glance,
Strange phantoms wheeled a revel dance,
And doomed the future slain.

Such forms were seen, such sounds were heard,
When Scotland's James his march prepared

For Flodden's fatal plain ;
Such, when he drew his ruthless sword,
As Choosers of the Slain adored

The yet unchristened Dane.
An indistinct and phantom band,
They wheeled their ring-dance hand in hand,
With gestures wild and dread ;

The seer, who watched them ride the storm,
Saw through their faint and shadowy form
The lightning's flash more red ;

And still their ghastly roundelay
Was of the coming battle-fray,
And of the destined dead.

SONG.

Wheel the wild dance ;
While lightnings glance,
And thunders rattle loud,
And call the brave
To bloody grave,
To sleep without a shroud.

• Our airy feet,
So light and fleet,
They do not bend the rye
That sinks its head when whirlwinds rave,
And swells again in eddying wave
As each wild gust blows by ;
But still the corn,
At dawn of morn
Our fatal steps that bore,
At eve lies waste,
A trampled paste
Of blackening mud and gore.

•

Wheel the wild dance
While lightnings glance,
And thunders rattle loud,
And call the brave
To bloody grave,
To sleep without a shroud.

Wheel the wild dance !
Brave sons of France,
For you our ring makes room ;
Make space full wide
For martial pride,
For banner, spear, and plume.
Approach, draw near,
Proud cuirassier !
Room for the men of steel !
Through crest and plate
The broadsword's weight
Both head and heart shall feel.

Wheel the wild dance
While lightnings glance,
And thunders rattle loud,
And call the brave
To bloody grave,
To sleep without a shroud.

Sons of the spear !
You feel us near
In many a ghastly dream ;
With fancy's eye
Our forms you spy,
And hear our fatal scream.
With clearer sight
Ere falls the night,
Just when to weal or woe
Your disembodied souls take flight
On trembling wing, — each startled sprite
Our choir of death shall know.

Wheel the wild dance
While lightnings glance,
And thunders rattle loud,
And call the brave
To bloody grave,
To sleep without a shroud.

Burst, ye clouds, in tempest showers,
Redder rain shall soon be ours —
See the east grows wan —
Yield we place to sterner game,
Ere deadlier bolts and direr flame

Shall the welkin's thunder shame ;
 Elemental rage is tame
 To the wrath of man.

At morn gray Allan's mates with awe
 Heard of the visioned sights he saw,
 The legend heard him say ;
 But the seer's gifted eye was dim,
 Deafened his ear, and stark his limb,
 Ere closed that bloody day. —
 He sleeps far from his Highland heath, —
 But often of the Dance of Death
 His comrades tell the tale,
 On picket-post, when ebbs the night,
 And waning watch-fires glow less bright,
 And dawn is glimmering pale.

THE SUN UPON THE WEIRDLAW HILL.



HE sun upon the Weirdlaw Hill
 In Ettrick's vale is sinking sweet ;
 The westland wind is hush and
 still,
 The lake lies sleeping at my feet.

Yet not the landscape to mine eye
Bears those bright hues that once it bore ;
Though Evening, with her richest dye,
Flames o'er the hills of Ettrick's shore.

With listless look along the plain,
I see Tweed's silver current glide,
And coldly mark the holy fane
Of Melrose rise in ruined pride.
The quiet lake, the balmy air,
The hill, the stream, the tower, the tree, —
Are they still such as once they were,
Or is the dreary change in me ?

Alas the warped and broken board,
How can it bear the painter's dye !
The harp of strained and tuneless chord,
How to the minstrel's skill reply !
To aching eyes each landscape lowers,
To feverish pulse each gale blows chill ;
And Araby's or Eden's bowers
Were barren as this moorland hill.





“The sun upon the Weirdlaw Hill
In Ettrick’s vale is sinking sweet.”

FAREWELL TO THE MUSE.

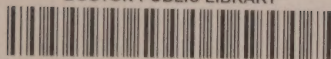


ENCHANTRESS, farewell, who so oft
has decoyed me
At the close of the evening through
woodlands to roam,
Where the forester, lated, with wonder espied
me
Explore the wild scenes he was quitting for
home.
Farewell, and take with thee thy numbers
wild speaking
The language alternate of rapture and
woe :
Oh ! none but some lover, whose heart-strings
are breaking,
The pang that I feel at our parting can
know.
Each joy thou couldst double, and when there
came sorrow,
Or pale disappointment to darken my way,
What voice was like thine, that could sing of
to-morrow,

Till forgot in the strain was the grief of to-day !
But when friends drop around us in life's
weary waning,
The grief, Queen of Numbers, thou canst
not assuage ;
Nor the gradual estrangement of those yet
remaining,
The languor of pain, and the chillness of
age.

'T was thou that once taught me, in accents
bewailing,
To sing how a warrior lay stretched on the
plain,
And a maiden hung o'er him with aid un-
availing,
And held to his lips the cold goblet in vain ;
As vain thy enchantments, O Queen of wild
Numbers,
To a bard when the reign of his fancy is o'er,
And the quick pulse of feeling in apathy
slumbers, —
Farewell, then, Enchantress ; — I meet
thee no more.

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